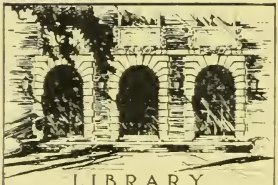

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MATILDA MONTFORT;

A

ROMANTIC NOVEL.

IN

FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

PETER PEREGRINE, Esq.

VOL. IV.

..... Lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold. SHAKESPEAR.

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MATILDA MONTFORT.

CHAPTER I.

Make room, and let him stand before our face.

SHAKESPEAR.

THE day after Matilda and Dumain arrived at Paris, the latter commenced his proposed inquiry, respecting Montfort. He visited, one after another, every prison, but without being able to obtain any intelligence of the object of his pursuit, the name of Montfort not being known at any of them.

He thought, probably, that, being a stranger, the keepers might, on that account, refuse him the information it was in their power to give. He, therefore, determined, without delay, to deliver the packet he had received from Father Philippe, for the Marquis de Chalons, to whom, also, he found the letter from the solitary inhabitant of the old abbey in Sicily, was directed; which he meant to deliver at the same time, and request his interest in aiding his pursuit.

He imagined, that it was only necessary to mention the name of this nobleman, to be immediately informed of the place of his residence; as, he had no doubt, but he must be well known in the capital. He found that was not the case; after the most minute inquiry, he could not obtain any information

respecting him. At last, he was given to understand, that he had left Paris some years since, to reside upon his estate in a distant province, and had not from that time returned; but he could not learn in what province his estate lay.

He was now at a loss what steps to pursue. He would not, however, let his inquiries drop; and obtaining from Matilda information where the lodgings were situated that they had occupied, when last in Paris, he directed his steps that way, thinking it possible that the landlord might have heard something of him; but he was as unsuccessful, as in his inquiries elsewhere.

Here he met with Lacroix, whom Montfort had saved from the jaws of a

prison; and who, upon learning Dumain's pursuit, determined to devote the whole of his time, and to use every exertion in his power, to find out, and, if possible, to serve his benefactor.

For this purpose, he accompanied Dumain in his search, who again visited the prisons—those miserable abodes of wretchedness and vice; into most of which they now gained admittance, to examine themselves, the persons confined; but could not learn any thing of him, they were in pursuit of.

Lacroix and Dumain, were both indefatigable in their endeavours, to discover the place of his confinement, but hitherto they had not been fortunate enough to find any clue, by which they could hope to be led to the object

they had in view, and they began to despair of success. They thought it possible, that the officers who arrested him, had not brought him to Paris, having only told Matilda that was their intention, the better to conceal the real place of his imprisonment.

In the course of their search, after the unfortunate Montfort, they were one day passing the grand chamber of parliament, about which they observed an unusual bustle. The court was extremely crowded, so that they could scarcely enter, and on asking upon what occasion it was, that it had met, were informed, that one of the nobles was going to take his trial for murder.

There was now a cry of, " Room,

" room, for the prisoner to pass," and he was placed at the bar, but from the situation that Dumain and Lacroix were in, they could not see him.

The charge was read, which was at the accusation of Baron Longuaville, and was to be supported by his evidence, and that of another person, then in court. It stated, that the prisoner was accused of the murder of his own wife, and of Count Troyes. After the ceremony of reading the charge had been gone through, the prisoner was told, that his trial would commence the day following, and he was moved from the bar.

The next morning, Dumain and Lacroix, who found themselves interested

in the trial, from Baron Longuaville being the accuser, attended at an early hour, and got into a situation from which they could both see, and hear the proceedings, without obstruction. After the form of opening the court had been gone through, the culprit made his appearance. Dumain started back appalled, when in the person of the accused murderer, he beheld his friend Montfort.—He was so placed, that he could see the prisoner at the bar, without being distinguished in the crowd by him.

The trial now began, and Baron Longuaville, being brought in, in an arm chair, seemingly much exhausted from the effects of his late wounds, gave his evidence. He said, the prisoner, instigated by jealousy against Count Troyes, waylaid him in his own garden,

first stabbed him, and then his own wife, both of whom fell down dead upon the spot, of which he was an eye witness, and which would be fully corroborated by the next evidence.

DUMAIN heard the name of Lebrun called aloud; and was surprised, to see the recluse of the old abbey in Sicily, mount the witness box. Being sworn, and ordered to give his testimony, he spoke as follows:—

" I AM called upon to give evidence
" against the prisoner at the bar, who
" is accused by Baron Longuaville of
" the murder of his own wife, and also
" of Count Troyes. Although in giv-
" ing my testimony, my oath obliges
" me to criminate the prisoner, I shall,
" at the same time, shew that he was

" imposed upon by Baron Longuaville.
" I come against him an unwilling wit-
" ness, because I believe he is not, in
" his heart, guilty; and that, at the time
" he committed the act, with which he
" is charged, he had the most pure and
" ardent affection for his wife. I shall
" also shew, that he was provoked to
" it, by the villany of the Baron, his
" then pretended friend, his now open
" accuser, who has commenced this
" prosecution for the worst and vilest
" end—namely, that he may pursue
" his diabolical intentions on his unpro-
" tected daughter, for whose person he
" has conceived a lustful passion."

Baron Longuaville was restless on his seat; he bit his lips; his bosom seeming, at the same time, full of anger,

and resentment againt Lebrun. He however went on.

" The prisoner at the bar, the Mar-
" quis de Chalons, ————"

" Marquis de Chalons!" involuntarily cried out Dumain, recollecting the packet that Father Philippe had given him. He handed it across to the prisoner, who gave it into the hands of his *avocat*.

Lebrun then proceeded, in the following terms.

" Baron Longuaville, at that time
" Chevalier Saint Fleur, was an inti-
" mate friend of the Marquis de Cha-
" lons, at whose *chateau*, in the vicinity

" of Paris, he was in the habit of fre-
" quently visiting, and to whose hospi-
" table, and festive board, he was al-
" ways a welcome guest. The Mar-
" quis and the Marchioness, were a
" pattern of conjugal fidelity, and of
" matrimonial felicity, until the peace
" and harmony that reigned in this
" happy family, was broken in upon,
" and brought into a state of absolute
" destruction, by the villanous lust of a
" favoured friend. This friend, Saint
" Fleur, whilst he was caressed by his
" unsuspecting noble host, was plotting
" with devilish anticipated pleasure,
" the ruin of his lovely wife.

" He engaged me in the plot he had
" laid, not wishing, for fear of suspi-
" cion, to appear openly in it himself.
" By exciting the jealousy of his friend,

" in the first instance, he hoped that he
" should, in the end, bring about a dis-
" agreement between him and his
" Marchioness, which would cause a
" separation; when, in the height of
" the resentment that he supposed
" would pervade her breast, it was his
" intention to step in; and, he hoped to
" accomplish his purpose. But mat-
" ters took another, and unexpected
" turn.

" WHILST Saint Fleur, in a distant
" manner, as if not meant, was, by every
" oblique way in his power, endeavour-
" ing to excite the Marquis's suspi-
" cion of his innocent wife's chastity, I
" was introduced to him, by the base de-
" signer, as a chevalier, and soon be-
" came a constant visitor at his table.
" I was honoured by him with marks

" of intimacy, which, wretch, that I
" am! I returned with villany.

" It was agreed between Saint Fleur
" and me, that I should take every op-
" portunity of instilling the same no-
" tions into the mind of our host, that
" he had been so long labouring to ef-
" fect. But all our efforts were vain.
" He had that sincere love for his wife,
" and that opinion of her chaste con-
" duct, that it was not in our power to
" make any impression on him.

" We now took another method.—
" Count Troyes was an intimate friend
" of the injured object of our diabolical
" pursuits. He had paid his addresses to
" the Marchioness, before she was mar-
" ried, and had been refused, in favour
" of the amiable man to whom she was

" afterwards united. On him we de-
" termined to fix, as our instrument to
" complete our designs.

" I, ACCORDINGLY, frequently hinted
" of the Marquis, the impropriety of the
" great degree of close intimacy, that
" appeared to exist between his wife,
" and this former lover; but he was
" proof against this mode of attack, as
" he was against those we had before
" tried.

" AT length, Saint Fleur contrived,
" that this victim of his project, and the
" wife of his patron, should be found
" together in an arbour in the gar-
" den.

" SAINT Fleur, knowing that she
" had retired there one day after dinner,

" requested the unsuspecting Count to
" solicit her, at that moment, to inter-
" fere with the Marquis, to receive into
" favour again, a distant, and de-
" pendent relative, who had justly in-
" curred his displeasure, and the dis-
" pleasure of the Marchioness also;
" and which, Saint Fleur knew, she
" would not comply with. He urged
" him to make use of all the persuasive
" language he was so eminently mas-
" ter of, in order to accomplish the
" object of his entreaty.

" As soon as Saint Fleur had inform-
" ed me, that the parties were toge-
" ther in that sequestered part of the
" garden, I prepared the mind of the
" Marquis to receive the impression of
" jealousy; and, at last, having wound
" him up as high as I durst attempt, I

" told him, I would give him occular
" proof of what I had advanced,
" and led him to the spot, just at
" the time, the Count was in the
" greatest warmth of his entreaty; who
" in his eagerness, had taken hold of
" the hand of the unfortunate Mar-
" chioness.

" The Marquis, his eyes flashing
" fire, flew to the spot; and exclaim-
" ing, " Villain! adulteress!" plung-
" ed his sword, first in the bosom
" of his friend, and immediately after-
" wards, in that of his lovely, innocent
" wife, and laid them both dead at his
" feet. What followed I know not, as
" both Saint Fleur and I left Paris and
" its neighbourhood instantly, for fear
" of being implicated in the mur-
" der."

THE crime was brought home to the unhappy Marquis; against the testimony that led to establish the fact, he having nothing in contradiction to advance.

PREVIOUS, however, to judgment being pronounced, the Marquis's *avocat* begged permission to read the packet, that Dumain had brought from Father Philippe; which being granted, it appeared that the hermit was Count Troyes, who had recovered from the wound given him by the Marquis, and had retired to the vale, near Fribourg, where he had long resided, supposed to be dead.

THE Marquis was, therefore, acquitted on that charge, but found guilty

of the murder of his wife, for which he was sentenced to pay the forfeit of his life; which awful judgment was then pronounced, and he was led from the court, to the prison allotted for condemned criminals of his class.

CHAPTER II.

..... The hands
Of lust and rapine, with unholy arts,
Watch to o'erturn the barrier of the laws,
That keeps them from their prey.

AKENSIDE.

In order to account for the circumstances, that led to the trial of the unhappy Marquis de Chalons, it will be necessary to take a retrospect, as far back as the arrival of him, and his daughter, at the vale Le Pui.

When they stopped at the inn, where the Marquis de Chalons, under his assumed name of Montfort, inquired of the landlord, if he could purchase a cottage in that neighbourhood, Baron Longuaville happened to be there, and saw Matilda. He was struck with her beauty; and understanding that she was the daughter of a man in no higher sphere of life, than the inquiry about a small cottage gave him the appearance of, he determined to endeavour to obtain possession of her person. He had not a view, at that time, of her father, or he might, although nearly twenty years had elapsed, have recollected in him the Marquis de Chalons; the person to whom he had, under the mask of friendship, done such an irreparable injury.

Upon inquiry, however, after they had resided some time at the cottage, he found, that the characters of both father and daughter were such, that he had very poor hopes of being able to allure her, by the hackneyed modes of seduction, and he resolved upon attempting to carry her off by force, or stratagem. With that intent, he endeavoured to compel her entrance into a carriage, in the vale, when she was fortunately rescued by Dumain, who was returning from the cottage, where he had been playing at chess with her father.

He had, after this, one day a sight of Matilda and her father, as they were walking in the garden, at a time that he was riding past. He instantly recognised the Marquis de Chalons. A man of

any feeling, would have shrunk back, at the idea of doing a farther injury to the person, he had already caused so much unhappiness to, and have desisted from his designs upon his daughter. But not so Longuaville; the knowledge of who she was, only served to add strength to his former determination. He again made the attempt, and again was foiled in it by Jaques, on the rise of the bowery hill behind the cottage.

Montfort, since he had been seen by Longuaville, was apprehensive of his own safety, as well as distressed on account of the repeated attacks on his daughter. On this account it was, he resolved to go to Paris; and, through his friends endeavour to obtain a pardon

from the king, for the murder of his wife, and of Count Troyes; urging as an extenuation of the offence, the criminal intercourse that subsisted between the deceased. After having used all the interest he could, and after having waited a considerable time, during which he was obliged to live in obscurity, he found that it was impossible to accomplish the object of his wishes; the Queen, who had entertained a tender affection for the Marchioness, having influence enough over the King, to cause him to lend a deaf ear, to every solicitation for that purpose.

It was not on his own personal account, that he was assailed by these apprehensions, or wished for a pardon. If he had considered himself only, death would have been a welcome guest; as

his life, ever since the act was committed, except at intervals, when his darling child, attracted the attention of his mind, had been a continuation of repentant grief, and deep-rooted sorrow, attended with the poignant recollection of how much he doted on the object, whose life-blood his sword had caused to flow. It was on his daughter's account, that he was anxious to be again enabled to appear publicly, in his proper character, that she might assume the consequence she was born to, and that he might be able to afford her that protection, that was due from a father; the attacks upon her, since they had lived in the vale Le Pui, adding strength to his anxious desires. He could not, in the most remote degree, conceive from what quarter they proceeded; not even thinking of Longuaville; but, at

all events, he judged it prudent to remove her, for a time at least, to some distance, and took the opportunity of his intended journey to Paris, to place her under the protection of Countess Villeroy, who was his aunt.

At Villeroy castle, it may be remembered, Baron Longuaville appeared not long after Matilda's arrival. He gained information in the vale Le Pui, that her father had taken her there, and he soon followed her, more intent than ever, on the attainment of his end. It was in furtherance of this design, that he gave the masked *féte*, in his gardens, where he personated the capuchin friar; watching, the whole evening, an opportunity to put his plan into execution, which he was just upon the point of accomplishing, at the time she was delivered from

his hands, by the hussar mask. Longuaville was wounded dangerously in the contest, owing to which, he was confined many weeks, in a retired cottage he had, on the Cevennes mountain; to visit whom it was, that the surgeon, who attended Countess Villeroy, had been, at the time, that he had kept her so long waiting for him.

When he had recovered from his wounds, he followed her to Bigorre; and arrived just after she had, by the orders of the Marquis de Pointoise, been conveyed away from that neighbourhood. As soon as it was known that she was in the monastery of Saint Catherine, the Marquis wrote to the Lady Abbess, desiring her to keep her safe within the walls, till Baron Longuaville should call, or send for her. He had

succeeded in imposing a false tale on the Marquis, giving him to understand, that she was the daughter of a tenant of his, from whom she had eloped, and that he would undertake to have her delivered safe into his hands again. When he arrived at the monastery, Matilda had fortunately made her escape from thence, by the river.

Longuaville, now grown almost frantic from these frequent disappointments, resolved he would make a bold effort, to get her into his possession. For this purpose, he wrote to Cardinal Mazarin, accusing Montfort of designs against the life of the king, in consequence of which, he was conveyed from the vale Le Pui, to the Bastile; where, as was constantly the case, he was kept closely confined, without it being

known that he was an inmate of that gloomy pile.

Longuaville now thought that he had him doubly sure. In the first place, he thought he would not dare to make known who he was, for fear of the consequences that might attend that knowledge, on account of the death of Count Troyes, and the Marchioness; and, in the second place, if he should be known, he would be detained to take his trial for their murder; in either of which cases, he would have time enough, to put in practice his schemes upon Matilda.

How those schemes were frustrated, has already been shewn; by the opportune arrival and interference of Dumain, in the hermit's vale.

NOTHING appearing to criminate Montfort in the charge of which he had been accused, he was of that acquitted; which Longuaville finding, feared his plans would be defeated. He then gave information against him, relative to the death of the Marchioness, and of Count Troyes; for which, as has appeared, he was tried and convicted of the murder of the former; not, however, before Baron Longuaville had himself, unexpectedly, a most serious charge preferred against him, in consequence of a sealed packet, found among the papers of the Marquis de Chalons; on account of which, he was committed to prison, and ordered to prepare for his trial, which was to commence in a short time.

CHAPTER III.

Thou tremblest, and the whiteness in thy cheek
Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand.

SHAKESPEAR.

DUMAIN had now a task to perform, of the most heart-rending and distressing nature, and how to get through it he knew not. It was a task somebody must perform, and the Marquis de Chalons, who had sent for him to his prison, had requested he would undertake

it,—to inform Matilda of the melancholy events that had just come to light.

He left the jail, after having promised, that he would prepare her for a visit to her wretched father. As he drew near her lodgings, he faltered in his steps; his feet reluctantly performed their office, and he could scarcely support himself. He lifted the knocker at the door; as it fell, his heart fell with it, and lay a ponderous weight in his bosom.

As he entered the parlour, Matilda cried, "Good heavens! Dumain; what "is the matter?"

"Arm yourself with all your forti-"tude, Matilda," said he.

" O, MY father, my father! is he " dead?" she cried.

" No, he lives—I have seen him— " I am just come from him—but—" his voice failing him, he turned deadly pale, and a sickness came upon him, which caused him to fall back upon a sofa.

WHEN he had recovered, Matilda said, " O, Dumain! I see by your agi- " tation, that you have a dreadful tale " to impart to me; keep me not longer " in uncertainty, but tell me all, I con- " jure you."

" 'TWAS for that purpose I came; " yet, now I am here, my tongue refuses " to utter the dreadful truth."

" O! RACK me not with this sus-
" pense," said she; " if I must hear
" that my dearest father is no more, let
" it come at once, that I may haste to
" throw myself upon his lifeless corse,
" and be buried with him; the same
" grave that receives his body, shall
" have a willing victim in his wretched
" daughter."

" No, Matilda, your father is not
" dead," said Dumain, " but lives.——
" O! how can I speak it!—senten-
" ced by his country's laws to die.
" Fortify your mind, call all your re-
" solution to your aid, to enable you
" to hear the dreadful story, I am com-
" missioned to inform you of, a story
" big with horror and distress."

" My father sentenced to die by his " country's laws? impossible!"

Dumain then informed her, in the most tender and delicate manner he could, of the circumstances that were proved against her father, upon his trial; and of his consequent condemnation to suffer death, by the hands of the common executioner.

Matilda listened to the tale with the greatest attention; and when Dumain concluded, cried out with frantic emotion, " The villain Longuaville! Oh! " my poor murdered mother, my in- " jured father!" and fell senseless on the floor.

Dumain rang the bell, and procured

some female assistants to convey her up to bed, he remaining in the parlour, hoping to hear an account of her recovery, that he might not be the bearer of news, that would so materially add to the distress, of the already wretched Chalons. It was some time, before she came to herself, when she sent down to Dumain, to inform him that she would accompany him to her father.—Upon making an attempt, however, to rise, she found that she was unable, and she was obliged to defer her dreaded visit, till the next day, if she should then be able to make it.

Dumain went back to the Marquis, who was in eager expectation of seeing his daughter; as, for the short time he had to live, he did not think of any gratification, but

the enjoyment of her presence; a melancholy enjoyment, in their state, it is true; but still, it was the only one of which he was then capable.

When Dumain made his appearance without her, he was disappointed; but when he told him, how she had been affected at his relation of the circumstances, that brought her father into his present unfortunate state, and, that in consequence of it, she was unable to leave her bed, he became almost frantic.

He cried out, "Miserable, and guil-
"ty wretch, that I am! I murdered her
"ever dear, angelic mother; and, now
"at second hand, plant a dagger in
"her as unoffending bosom! Oh!
"guilty, wretched murderer! I killed

" the best and most lovely of wives, and " am prematurely sending after her, " the most dutiful and excellent of " children. Oh! Maria, Maria!—Oh! " Matilda!"

HERE he was so overcome with his feelings, that he could utter no more.

DUMAIN remained with him till night, endeavouring to tranquillize, as much as in his power, his perturbed mind; and succeeded in bringing him into a more quiet state, before he left him. The Marquis requested he would inform him, as early as possible, in the morning, of the condition of his daughter's health; which he promised, and took his leave.

THE next morning, he called upon Matilda, but understood, that she was not able to leave her bed: the physician that had been called in, said, that it would be dangerous for her to attempt it, for some days yet.

THIS was a distressing account for Dumain to take to the Marquis, who was all anxiety for the wished, yet dreaded, meeting with his daughter.—He wished to pour all his griefs into her affectionate bosom, yet dreaded the pain he must thereby inflict upon her tender heart. He wished for the consoling and gentle attention, she had ever been in the habit of paying to him; yet dreaded the moment, that she should look upon her father, for the first time, after she knew him to be the murderer of her innocent mother.

These conflicting ideas tortured the breast of the unfortunate Marquis, and did not leave him a moment of peace or quiet. Nor were these thoughts all that corroded his mind; the recollection of the happy days he had passed, in the adored society of his amiable and beloved Maria, which might have still continued, had he not listened to the imposition practised upon his senses, was more than he could bear the weight of.

He called to his remembrance the many accomplishments, and the almost more than human excellence of heart, that she possessed, which he had, since he knew her innocence, valued in his mind at a higher rate than ever.—And, when he recollected that he had deprived of life, that valued object of

his adoration, for whom alone it was, even at the time he committed the act, that he wished to live, he was filled with grief and sorrow, to which he could give utterance only in sighs and groans.

Whilst Dumain was with the Marquis, trying every method in his power, to soothe his sorrowful mind, a person of a commanding aspect, and handsome figure, entered the miserable apartment where they were. Dumain did not recollect that he had ever seen him before; but, the moment he spoke, he recognised the voice of Father Philippe.

Count Troyes went up to the Marquis, (who turned from him with shame at the thoughts of the attempt he had made upon his life) and taking him by

the hand, said, " Don't think, my dear
" Marquis, that I have left the solitude
" I had vowed to spend the remainder
" of my life in, to insult you, in your
" present unhappy situation. I came
" from different motives. I came, to
" endeavour to render you all the ser-
" vice my power and interest can com-
" mand, in endeavouring to obtain from
" the king, a pardon for a crime, that
" you was led into by villany and im-
" position. I have heard the whole of
" the story, from a man who was a prin-
" cipal actor in the scene; from Le-
" brun, who was confined by sickness
" at the infirmary belonging to my re-
" treat, at the time I, unknowingly,
" afforded your daughter shelter from
" Longuaville. He told me all, and in
" consequence of that information, I
" gave Dumain a letter for you, cer-

" tifying that I was still living; but,
" being fearful that might not have
" the same effect as my presence, as
" soon as I heard that you was to be
" put upon your trial, I resolved to
" leave, for a while, my solitude, to do
" you the justice that I conceived was
" due to you.

" My intention now, is to raise all
" my friends, from whom I have so long
" been absent; and, with our united
" strength, to petition the king, to grant
" you a pardon for a crime, the punish-
" ment for which, ought to fall upon
" the head of that arch-villain Lon-
" guaville."

The Marquis's heart was too full to reply, he pressed the Count's hand to his bosom, the glistening tear starting

from his eye, at the remembrance of the last time he had seen him, when he plunged his sword into the bosom of his beloved wife, whose figure was ever present to his view.

The Count, soon after, took leave of him, expressing a hope, that the next time he came, he should bring with him some consolatory information. Dumain departed at the same time, after assuring him, that he would not fail to bring him intelligence, respecting the health of Matilda, the next morning.

It may not be thought impertinent to the matter, to give here a short account of the previous circumstances, that led to the momentary suspicion which induced the Marquis to enter-

tain against Count Troyes and the Marchiones; which will also lead us, to account for the reason the Count had for bidding the world and all its bustle adieu, to pass his time in the solitary vale, in which his hermitage was situated. Why he again left it, he has already told the Marquis.

CHAPTER IV.

For my distracted mind
What succour can I find?

LYTTELTON.

COUNT Troyes, who upon entering into his retirement in his hermitage, assumed the name of Father Philippe, in his younger days cut a conspicuous figure upon the theatre of the world, political as well as fashionable. In the former, he had filled some diplomatic

situations with credit to his abilities, and with benefit to the state, which had deservedly rendered him a favourite with Louis XIV. He was nearly of the same age with that monarch, and was, in his youth, a constant partaker of all the pleasures that he indulged in, as a relaxation from the busy politics of his day.

At the time of the King's marriage, with the Infanta of Spain, there came over in her suite, a lady of exquisite beauty, and of uncommon accomplishments. Troyes, from his situation with the King, being appointed a principal officer in the young Queen's household, had frequent opportunities of being in the company of Donna Maria de Origuela, to whom he soon lost his heart. He had the mortification, however, to

find, that his love was not returned; the more assiduous he was in his attentions, the more coolness he experienced from her; till, at length, upon making an open declaration of his passion, Donna Maria told him, with ingenuousness, that circumstances prevented her from accepting the honour he intended her, and requested that he would not again mention the subject to her. He endeavoured to come at a knowledge of the cause of her rejecting his suit; but, it was in vain, as she declined giving him any farther reason.

JEALOUSY now took possession of his mind, and he was convinced that he had a rival. He determined to watch her more closely than he had done, and soon found, that the Marquis de Chalons was the favoured lover.

THE Count and he, had long been in the habit of the strictest friendship; but friendship fled before all-powerful love, and he was now looked upon by Troyes as his greatest enemy. The next time they saw each other, was in Donna Maria's presence, when the Marquis received a challenge from him. They agreed to meet the day following, which coming to the knowledge of the King, through the Queen, whom Donna Maria had informed, requesting her interference to prevent bloodshed, they were both put under arrest, till they gave their word of honour, that the matter should proceed no farther.

COUNT Troyes now made interest with the Queen, to use her influence over her attendant, to induce her to look favourably upon his love. The Queen

undertook to plead his cause; but, as soon as she understood, that Chalons and Maria had been acquainted in Spain, and that a mutual and tender passion had long subsisted between them, she no longer interfered, but left her favourite, to the exercise of her own free choice; which, of course, fell upon the Marquis de Chalons, and they were soon after married.

The Count was a long time, before he could get the better of his disappointment, as he entertained for Donna Maria, the most ardent love with which a human heart could be inspired. He, at length, however, so far conquered it, as to bear to be in her company, without any of those violent emotions, with which he had, at first, been affected; and, in the end, the for-

mer intimacy and friendship between him and the Marquis de Chalons, were renewed.

About this time, Troyes was sent by the King, upon a foreign mission, and was absent from Paris for a considerable time. Upon his return, he found that Cardinal Mazarin, prime minister to Louis, had succeeded in accomplishing a scheme he had long been aiming at, but hitherto without being crowned with the success he wished.

He had fixed upon this diplomatic employment for Troyes, because he knew it was not possible to attain the wished-for end of it; and he thought his return unsuccessful, would be a proper time to put in force all his power, to alienate the regard of the King from

his favourite; as his haughty spirit could not bear any one to share with him his sovereign's thoughts.

When the Count returned to Paris, he was refused admittance into the presence, being forbid to appear at court. This affected him much, as he was not conscious that he had acted in any way derogatory to his duty, or wanting in that respect his sovereign had a right to expect from him. It was true, that he had not been successful in the termination of the mission intrusted to him; but, he was well convinced, that the obstacles in the way of accomplishing it were insurmountable; and, that if any other person had been employed, the result would have been just the same.

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He could not, for a considerable time, conceive by what motives the King was actuated, in his conduct towards him, in thus disgracing him. —At last, he was informed, through a channel which sprang from a source that could be depended upon, that the Cardinal was at the bottom of it; that it had long been a favourite object with him; and, that he had been recommended to the employment that he had been sent upon, purposely that he might have some grounds to work on, in rooting out the King's affection for him. The Cardinal first, magnified the benefits that were to arise from a favourable issue of the negociation that the Count was sent to conduct; and then, the disadvantages that would result from its being undertaken without the end be-

ing accomplished; and, after its unsuccessful conclusion, plainly said, that it was lost through want of zeal.

Count Troyes, at first, thought of writing to the King, and requesting permission to throw himself at his feet, when he hoped that he could exculpate himself from any alleged crime, that might have been imputed to him. But, the moment he knew that the Cardinal had instigated his royal master to act against him, he gave up the idea, well knowing that it would be certain ruin, to attempt to set himself against his pride and haughty despotism.

He retired to a *chateau* he had, in the province of Burgundy, where he resided in privacy, for some time. He here

formed a second attachment, which seemed likely to be attended with a result more favourable to his wishes, than that he had before felt, for the beautiful Donna Maria de Origuela, now the Marchioness de Chalons. He loved, and was beloved; the day of their marriage was fixed. The slowly-creeping hours rolled heavily along, and time, which ever flies with hurried speed, now lagged tardily, and kept him from his anticipated bliss.

The long-wished-for day arrived; he rose early, and dressed with a bridegroom's gaiety. His breast beating high with transport at his approaching happiness, he repaired at the appointed time, to lead his charmer to the holy fane; when, instead of meeting his wil-

ling bride, with smiles of love, and looks of modest joy, he was informed that she had in the night been seized with illness, and was then in a high fever, confined to her bed. Her disorder increasing, baffled medical skill; and the day after that, on which he expected to clasp her to his bosom, a joyful bride, he beheld her a clay-cold, lengthened corse. This was a severe blow upon him, and took such hold of his spirits, that he had nearly fallen a victim to his grief and melancholy.

His physicians recommended change of scene to him, and he revisited Paris. He had a great wish to be reinstated in the favour of the King, that he might obtain employment, at some foreign court, as the only means of diverting his mind,

from the settled gloom, that hung upon it. With this intention, he employed a friend to sound the disposition of the Cardinal towards him. The result was unfavourable to his hopes, as Mazarin added threats and menaces, to his refusal of mentioning his name to the King; he was, therefore, obliged to give up the idea.

After this, he thought of returning again to his *chateau*, in Burgundy; and, had appointed an early day to leave Paris. In the mean while, he passed much of his time with his friend, the Marquis de Chalons and his amiable Marchioness, with whom he had been spending the day, when he was found weltering in his blood, senseless, on the ground. He was taken up for dead. However,

the surgeon, after examining the wound he had received, found that it was not mortal, and he soon recovered.

Not having perceived from whose arm the blow proceeded, he was convinced the assassination could only originate with the Cardinal Mazarin, who feared a successful application might be made to the king, to induce him to reinstate in his favour, his former youthful companion. The instant he was able to travel, therefore, he left Paris, with an intention of making a foreign tour.

In the course of it, he stopped some days at Fribourg, to indulge in the melancholy, which hung upon him, from the sudden loss of his bride, which he had not recovered; he rambled about

the variegated and picturesque country, in the neighbourhood of that town; and, being struck with the singular beauty of the vale, in which he had since resided, which was so well calculated to suit the gloomy state of his mind, he determined to fix his future abode there.

Assisted by his servant, he immediately began of excavating the rock, which he formed into the commodious hermitage, as has been described.—Here he had, ever since, resided, without it being ever, even guessed, who he was, or from whence he came. His flowing beard, which he had not shortened during the time he was in the vale, and his locks hanging on his shoulders, with his dress, which was a

robe that hung loosely on his back, except when he tied it round his waist, with a hempen girdle, gave him the appearance of a much older man than he really was, and served as a complete disguise, if any, who had had a former knowledge of him, should have paid a visit to the valley, in which his hermitage was situated.

CHAPTER V.

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen.

POPE.

ON the day appointed, Saint Fleur was brought into court, and put upon his trial; the arraignment charging him with the murder of the late Baron Longuaville.

LEBRUN was again examined, who said, "The Chevalier Saint Fleur, now

" Baron Longuaville, and myself, are
" relations. We were companions in
" our youth, and continued upon terms
" of friendship, till his villany caused
" me to be under the necessity of ba-
" nishing myself from connections, ever
" held most dear, and from my native
" country; to which I voluntarily re-
" turned, to make all the reparation in
" my power, for the forced part I took
" in his guilt, whose extravagance and
" debauchery, led him to the commis-
" sion of crimes, at which human na-
" ture would shudder. I have, for many
" years, been shut out from the world,
" which have been spent in repentant
" tears, and sighs of sorrow, for not
" doing more, towards preventing the
" murders he has committed.

" Saint Fleur's fortune not being

" large, it was unequal of itself, to
" maintain him in his excesses, which
" caused him frequently to make appli-
" cation to his relation, the Baron Lon-
" guaville, for assistance; whose purse
" was always unstrung to his wants,
" and his house always open to receive
" him with hospitality. Not all this li-
" berality was sufficient to supply his
" extravagance, and he began to lay
" schemes, to possess himself of all the
" Baron's property, which he found
" could only be done by his death.

" He formed a plan for assassinating
" him, in which he attempted to en-
" gage me to assist him; but, I perem-
" torily refused to have any concern in
" so atrocious an act. He had first re-
" course to persuasions, accompanied
" with large promises of future reward,

" if I would assist him. Finding that I " could not be moved by that mode " of proceeding, he used threats, which " I was equally proof against; declar- " ing that I would rather forfeit his " connection, than be, in any manner, " concerned in an act of that nature; " after this, he did not mention the sub- " ject to me any more.

" But a short period of time had " elapsed, after I had given him this " peremptory refusal, when the Baron- " ess Longuaville was attacked with " a violent fever, which carried her off, " after a few days illness. The Baron " was inconsolable for her loss, and sud- " denly disappearing about the same " time, it was reported to the world, " that he had died of grief and sorrow, " for the death of the Baroness; but

" Saint Fleur confessed to me, that he
" had locked him up in the subterra-
" neous vaults of the old castle of
" Saint Aubyn, near which was Baron
" Longuaville's *chateau.*

" Saint Fleur and the Marquis de
" Saint Aubyn are relatives, the latter
" of whom has large estates in the pro-
" vince of Languedoc; upon one of
" which, stands this ancient castle,
" which has long been in a state of ruin
" and decay. Saint Fleur was ac-
" quainted with all the subterraneous
" vaults and passages under it, and con-
" ceived it to be a place well calculated
" for his design.

" Accordingly, one evening when
" the Baron was walking alone, he was
" forcibly seized by Saint Fleur, who,

" with assistance, hurried him through
" the passages, into an interior vault,
" that had been previously prepared for
" his reception, where he was fastened
" to the wall, by massy chains round
" his arms and legs. In this situation
" he was inhumanly left, having several
" doors closed upon him, so that his
" voice could not possibly be heard
" from without.

" It was Saint Fleur's intention that
" he should perish here of hunger and
" of cold; but, I took the means, as
" long as I staid in that part of the
" country, of counteracting his designs,
" by furnishing him with provisions
" and warm clothing, to defend him
" from the chilling damp of his noi-
" some dungeon. What was done af-
" ter I was obliged to fly from Saint

" Fleur's persecution I am totally igno-
" rant of."

He then gave an account of the reason that induced him to leave the country,—Saint Fleur, after the discovery of his attempt on his wife, seeking revenge, by accusing him as a culprit to the laws, the particulars of which he related to Dumain, in the Abbey of Saint Reale, in Sicily; there is, therefore, no necessity to repeat the account here.

Lacroix was next examined, as an evidence against Saint Fleur. He said, that he had been witness to many acts of his guilt, which nothing should have prevented him from discovering before, but the fear of his vengeance; as he had, for some time, been obliged to hide himself from his pursuit, having a certain

knowledge, that he was in search of him, that he might accuse him of crimes, of which he was innocent; which, if necessary, he would support with his own oath, for the purpose of putting out of the way, a man who held so many secrets in his heart, that if divulged, would overwhelm him in ruin. But now, that he found the truth of the evidence he had to give, would be supported by that of others, he cheerfully came forward to tell what he knew.—He then proceeded as follows:

" When Lebrun saved his life from " Saint Fleur's revenge, for his disap- " pointment in his views upon his wife, " by flying from his reach, I was retain- " ed in the employment of the Cheva- " lier. A few days after I had joined " him, we went into the vaults of the

" castle of Saint Aubyn, to see, as he
" said, if the doors were in a secure
" state, or if there was an appearance
" of any person's having been there, by
" which it was possible that the late
" Baron's body might be discovered.—
" The first door we came to, we found
" unlocked, which induced him to pro-
" ceed, till we reached the recess,
" where the unhappy Baron was chain-
" ed to the wall. Instead of finding
" him a lifeless corse, as Saint Fleur
" expected, he was alive, and in as good
" health, as a man in his miserable and
" melancholy situation could be. He
" had provisions by him, sufficient for
" the consumption of many days, and
" was wrapped in warm clothing, that
" defended him from the cold of the
" damp walls, with which he was sur-
" rounded.

" When Saint Fleur saw him liv-
" ing, he vented his rage in curses on
" Lebrun, to whose charge he laid the
" deception that had been practised
" upon him. He threw the provisions
" out of the reach of the unhappy vic-
" tim, and deaf to all his earnest en-
" treaties, and piteous moanings, lock-
" ed the doors upon him, taking the
" keys himself, and, left the wretched
" Baron, to linger in the most horrible
" state in which a fellow creature can
" be placed, that of perishing through
" hunger and thirst.

" Saint Fleur had yet only half com-
" pleted his plan; the Baron had left a
" son, and a daughter, who stood in the
" way of his attainment of the object
" he had in view. The death of the
" son he left to one of the persons, who

" assisted him in forcing the Baron into
" the secret vaults of the castle. As
" for the daughter, it was his intention
" to marry her, in order to get possession
" of the whole of the property, that
" then would centre in her.

" This, however, he did not find so
" easy to be accomplished as he had
" flattered himself it would be, as she
" peremptorily refused his offers, and
" treated him with scorn.

" He then attempted her life several
" times, by administering poison in her
" victuals; but, his scheme was always
" frustrated, by having medical aid at
" hand; the consequence attending
" the attempts, being several severe fits
" of sickness, which her youth, and

" good constitution, always enabled her
" to get the better of.

" He afterwards sent her to a con-
" vent, where he hoped she would be
" induced to take the veil. In that he
" was also disappointed. It was then
" given out that she was dead; in con-
" sequence, of which, he succeeded
" to the estates, and title of the late Ba-
" ron Longuaville, to whom, after his
" children, he was the next heir.

" Soon after this, the Marquis de
" Saint Aubyn succeeding his father
" in the possession of his estates, de-
" termined upon repairing the an-
" cient castle, and to make it in fu-
" ture, the principal place of his resi-
" dence.

" SAINT FLEUR shuddered, lest the " Baron's body should be found by the " workmen employed. He made many " attempts, to remove it, but could " never accomplish his wish, as one " part of the castle had been made ha- " bitable for the workmen to live in, " whilst they were repairing it; who, " being always on the spot, prevented " him having as much time privately, " as would be necessary for his pur- " pose.

" HE conceived a plan, which in " the end succeeded, in inducing the " Marquis to relinquish his intentions. " When the opposite tower to that in " which were the remains of Baron " Longuaville, was nearly completed, he " found means to set it on fire; which " was done in so effectual a manner,

" that the internal part was very soon
" reduced to ashes. The Marquis at-
" tributing this to accident, had it again
" repaired; when it was again set on
" fire, and reduced to its former state.
" This was done a third time, and the
" Marquis gave up the idea of repair-
" ing it, relieving Saint Fleur's mind,
" from the fear he had apprehended of
" the late Baron's body being disco-
" vered.

" It might be imagined that he
" would now be content, as he had
" got the full enjoyment of the proper-
" ty of his murdered relative. But not
" so, with his increased riches, his ex-
" travagance increased, and he was still
" as needy as ever. His guilty soul now
" prompted him, to turn his longing
" eyes on the vast possessions of the

" Marquis de Saint Aubyn, whose next
" heir he was, now that the late Baron's
" children were dead; and he deter-
" mined upon sacrificing him to his
" wants, brought on by his excesses
" and debaucheries.

" With this intent, learning, that he
" had again come to his cottage in the
" vale Le Pui, which he had fitted up
" to reside occasionally at, during the
" time the castle had been repairing,
" and which he had not been at, since
" the last fire, he employed a person
" to watch him, who one night, came
" in haste, and told him, that the Mar-
" quis was then gone towards the old
" castle. He flew to the place, and as
" the supposed Marquis was leaving it,
" he fell upon him, assisted by the man
" he had brought with him, and

" would soon have put an end to his
" life, if it had not been for the oppor-
" tune arrival of a young man, whose
" strong and sinewy arm, dealt power-
" ful blows about him, and put Saint
" Fleur and his companion to flight,
" after wounding them both.

" It was afterwards found, that the
" person who had been taken for the
" Marquis de Saint Aubyn, was the
" tenant of his cottage; whom they
" had wounded so dangerously, that he
" could not be conveyed home, but
" was under the necessity of being
" carried to the dwelling of the father
" of the young man, who had come to
" his assistance."

Here Lacroix finished his evidence,

relative to the murder of the late Baron Longuaville; it being deemed unnecessary, for him to give an account of the many other crimes, with which he was acquainted, as they were not connected with this charge.

The packet, which led to the accusation of Baron Longuaville, or, rather of the Chevalier Saint Fleur, which, it has been mentioned, was found among the papers of Montfort, when he was taken from the cottage in the vale Le Pui, was that which he found on the floor of the vault in the castle of Saint Aubyn, when he discovered the skeleton, and which was addressed to the Marquis de Saint Aubyn. It was written by the late Baron, during his confinement in that place, by his

unnatural relative, and was read aloud, by the clerk of the court, as follows:

" It is now nearly a week since I " have seen Lebrun, who was never " more than two or three days, at a " time, absent from me, since I have " been, by the brutality of Saint Fleur, " confined in this cold and comfortless " dungeon.

" Another day has elapsed, with- " out Lebrun's appearance. I am fear- " ful he may have fallen a victim to the " savage ferocity of Saint Fleur, for " exercising his humanity towards me.

" Saint Fleur's visit to me has con- " firmed me in my suspicion. Deaf to " the feelings of humanity; deaf to the " dictates of nature and of kindness;

" deaf to the intreaties and supplications
" of a wretched being, whom he leaves
" here to perish, he has turned from
" me, and left me, without a ray of
" comfort.—I have heard the massy
" bolts shoot in the locks;—I have seen
" the face of human being for the last
" time.—I am prepared to die, and
" only pray, that my death may not
" be lingering and protracted, as my
" brutal and savage murderer wishes it
" should.

" ANOTHER miserable day opens up-
" on the wretched Longuaville. Whe-
" ther these eyes shall behold its close,
" God only knows.——I find my ex-
" hausting strength fast decay.——My
" trembling joints can scarcely guide
" my pen.——My parched mouth, and
" gnawing stomach, warn me, that if I

" survive a few hours longer, they must
" be the hours of a maniac, raging with
" burning madness.

" WHILST my senses yet remain, let
" me make use of the means Lebrun,
" unknown to my cruel murderer, has
" furnished me with, to beg, if this
" should fall into the hands of the Mar-
" quis de Saint Aubyn, that he will see
" the infant children of their murdered
" father, protected in their right, against
" the machinations, that I doubt not
" will be practised against them, by
" Saint Fleur.——They are now in his
" hands, and I fear the worst.

" IF he should have hidden from the
" world, and from their relations, the
" tender innocents, as perhaps he may,
" to bring them up as aliens to his

" blood, by which he may hope to gain
" the possession of their property, with-
" out imbruing farther his hands in
" blood, I request the Marquis will
" cause search to be made for them.
" They may be known, by peculiar
" marks upon their bodies, my daugh-
" ter having a mole, the representation
" of a mulberry, on her left shoulder,
" whilst my son has the same mark up-
" on his breast.

" I REQUEST, that the Marquis de
" Saint Aubyn will ———

" I HAVE again resumed my pen,
" having been obliged, by weakness, to
" lay it down.——

" I REQUEST the Marquis de Saint
" Aubyn ———

" I CAN no more;—my brain turns " round;—my eyes grow dim.——Let " me haste to fold and seal this pa- " per.—All is—all is—darkness,—and " ——————"

THIS paper was taken, as it was directed, to the Marquis de Saint Aubyn, who sent it to the president, to make what use of it he thought necessary; and, through which it was, that all the villany of Saint Fleur was discovered.

MANY other circumstances of his guilt were mentioned by the witnesses, but as they were irrelevant to the charge upon which he was tried, the president refused to receive them as evidence against him. Suffice it to say, that several others were examined, who corroborated the testimony given by Lebrun

and Lacroix, on which Saint Fleur was convicted, and received sentence of death, which seemed to give general satisfaction to a crowded court, who signified their horror at his atrocious conduct, by loud and repeated groans, as he was carried from the bar.

THE deadly pallid hue of his countenance; the distortion of his features; the deep and heavy sighs that escaped from his perturbed bosom, during the trial; with the universal tremor of his whole frame, when sentence was pronounced, shewed the hopeless state of his wicked mind.

CHAPTER VI.

With grief oppress'd, and prostrate in the dust
.....I own the sentence just.

CARTER.

MATILDA was not yet sufficiently recovered, from the effects of the shock she had received, to be able to bear an interview with her father; and, Dumain repaired to his prison without her. He had not been long there, before Count Troyes entered. The melancho-

ly that was depicted in his features, was an index to the unwelcome news he had to communicate.

" You must arm yourself, my dear " Marquis," said he, " to meet the " blow with fortitude. I have thrown " myself at the feet of the King. I " have interested myself with all my " former connections to do the same: " we have even won over to our per- " suasion the Cardinal Mazarin; but " all to no purpose. The King is in- " exorable, and, moved by the Queen, " who cannot be induced to forgive the " person who destroyed the life of her " favourite Donna Maria, he has abso- " lutely signed the fatal order for your " execution, which must take place to- " morrow."

" DEATH," said the Marquis, " is not,
" to me, armed with the terror that to
" the eyes of some he shews. I have,
" in the embattled plain, in the can-
" non's roaring mouth, faced him with-
" out dismay, and can upon the scaffold
" meet him, with a steady and un-
" ruffled brow. It is life, my friend,
" that displays its terrors to my view.
" It is the ills of life, my dearest daugh-
" ter may sustain, when deprived of a
" father's care, of a father's fond protec-
" tion, that plants a dagger in my heart.
" There, there, I own I am a coward.
" There it is, and only there, that my
" heart is assailable to the fears of
" death. For myself alone, I would
" wish to die. Never have I known a
" cloudless hour of joy, since my hand
" deprived of existence the best, the
" fondest, the most lovely of her sex;

" and never could I know comfort
" more, if my life were to be extended
" double the usual length of man's.
" Death to me, therefore, would be
" happiness and joy; and, cheerfully
" would I leap the gulph that parts us,
" but that the thoughts of Matilda
" draw me back. The thoughts of
" what she may suffer, when thrown on
" the inhospitable wild of a vicious
" world, friendless and unprotected,
" without a monitor to warn her of its
" bogs and quicksands, and without a
" supporting hand to guide her o'er its
" slippery paths, is more than this
" throbbing heart can bear.

" Oh, Matilda! methinks I see thee,
" a prey to some lawless ruffian, a
" wretched victim to his power or
" fraud; borne down by oppression's

" burden, or by the no less destructive
" engine, deceit; doomed to drag on a
" heavy existence, surrounded by mi-
" sery and woe, hourly cursing thy fa-
" ther's rash and murderous hand, that
" brought thee to that state. Me-
" thinks I see thee, at last, in the prime
" of life, but long bereft of health, up-
" on the bed of death, writhing in ago-
" nizing pain, and thy gentle heart
" breaking with unmerited, accumulat-
" ed woe. Methinks I see thy once-
" sparkling eyes, now deprived of their
" lustre, ready to close for ever on this
" troublous sublunary scene. I see thy
" roseat cheeks, and lily brow, once
" the admiration and delight of a gaz-
" ing crowd; that angelic form, which
" created 'desire in man, and envy in
" woman,' sicklied o'er with the pallid
" hue of death, lying stretched, a stiff-

" ened, lengthened corse, without a
" friend to perform the last sad offices
" of humanity. Oh, my friend! fancy
" pictures to my mind, my dearest
" child, encountering all the miseries,
" and all the wretchedness, that unpro-
" tected innocence is subject to."

" CALM your troubled spirits," said Troyes, " and let not imaginary evils
" prey upon that mind, which is proof
" against, and can boldly face the real
" ills of life. Let not these vision-
" ary ideas embitter the moments,
" that may be to so much more ad-
" vantage passed. Let us, my friend,
" think, if possible, of some method by
" which the impending blow may be
" avoided. I have still one expedient
" left, that lets in a feeble ray of hope
" across my heart. Matilda shall in
" person to the Queen. She shall in

" person present a petition. Who " knows, but her interesting, innocent " beauty, and above all, the likeness to " her mother, may have an effect, that " all the powerful interest of the court " has failed to excite!"

" ALAS!" said the Marquis, " that " is a feeble ray of hope, indeed; but I " leave all to your friendship, being " convinced, what friend can do, will " be accomplished by you."

COUNT Troyes and Dumain repaired to the lodgings of Matilda, to inform her of this plan. Of course, she readily consented to any scheme, that was calculated to extricate her father out of his present situation; and, as no time was to be lost, she prepared to go into the presence of the Queen.

Count Troyes, having obtained permission to wait upon her Majesty, introduced the lovely daughter of the ill-fated Marquis de Chalons. She was received with condescension; she delivered her petition, which the Queen read, and afterwards heard her plead, with all the eloquence of filial tenderness and affection, in terms and manner, that would have moved any heart in her favour, that had not been predetermined against listening to the voice of mercy. It was all to no purpose; the murderer of her favourite Donna Maria, she said, could not be forgiven, on any account whatever, and that the law must take its course.

Matilda heard the fatal doom pronounced. She, for a moment, looked at the Queen, with an involuntary air of

supplication, which spoke more than words could say. She then appeared as if suddenly recollecting herself, and was going to drop on her knee, when the blood forsook her cheeks; her eyes were fixed; her knees smote each other; the objects before her turned round; she endeavoured to catch at the next person to her, but failing in the attempt, she fell senseless on the floor, in which state she remained, when the Queen left the apartment.

This was the last hope that presented itself, for saving the life of Chalons, and having failed in it, he prepared to meet his fate with resignation.

He employed the greatest part of that night, in writing to the Queen; not to supplicate anew for her interfe-

rence with the King, to grant him a pardon, but to interest her, if he could, in favour of his dear and unprotected child.

In terms the strongest that his mind could dictate, he recommended the daughter of her, who had been honoured, in so high a degree, with the favour of her Majesty, to her future protection. If he was assured of this, he said, he should lay down his life with greater pleasure than retain it, as it had long been on her account only, that he wished to live.

He then folded the paper, and sealed it, inclosing it in a cover directed for Matilda, in which he enjoined her to deliver it in person to the Queen, as

soon after he was dead, as she found herself able so to do.

The remainder of the night he spent in private meditation. He was engaged in serious and solemn contemplation, suited to his situation, when he was interrupted by a noise without; and, lifting up his eyes, he perceived the pale dawn of morn feebly to peep through his grated window, which soon eclipsed the faint yellow gleam, that proceeded from his lamp, and day light succeeded.

The noise that he had heard, was from the approaching footsteps of Count Troyes. He told the Marquis, that he had succeeded in obtaining a respite of his sentence, for two days; which he had been induced to make application

for to the King, through Cardinal Mazarin, at the earnest solicitation of Matilda, who was miserable, and almost frantic, at the idea, that she should only have a few minutes allowed her, to take an everlasting leave of her father; as the sentence of the law was to have been put into execution that day, if he had not succeeded in his petition.

CHAPTER VII.

.....How his great heart
Beats thick! His roomy chest by far too scant
To give the lungs full play!

BLAIR.

MATILDA had now determined to visit her father that day, and waited for Dumain to accompany her, according to a promise he had made her the day before. The morning had passed away, and the evening was making rapid strides towards darkness, before he

made his appearance. She waited in the utmost anxiety and suspense. At length, he came, and apologized for his absence, by saying that a circumstance of a most interesting and extraordinary nature, had been the cause of his detention.

MATILDA, with trembling steps, walked towards the *fiacre*, that was to convey her to the dismal mansion of her father. Dumain and she entered it. They proceeded, in silence, through some dark and gloomy streets, and stopped before a large stone building. Matilda could with difficulty alight. She was obliged to be supported by Dumain.

As they passed through the vaulted passages, the clanking of chains, and

clapping of heavy doors, which echoed through the dismal pile, filled her soul with horror and dismay. They were conducted to the room, where the Marquis was confined. Matilda stood some moments at the door, before she had courage to enter.

When Dumain opened it, the Marquis and she rushed into each other's arms, in which position they remained for some time, unable to speak, their voices being stifled with sobs and groans, which issued from their agitated bosoms.

At length, Matilda, in inarticulate accents, sobbed, "My dearest father!"

"My dearest child!" said the Marquis; the big tear starting from his eye.

ANOTHER interval of awful silence ensued.

AFTER many efforts, the Marquis, in in the greatest agitation of spirits, said, " Do not, my child, despise the " memory of your father.—When I am " dead—as soon I shall be—cast a veil " over the act for which I suffer, and " through it view dark and villanous " imposition, urged to your father's " ruin, and your angelic mother's vio- " lent death. Oh, Matilda, had you " known your mother, you would have " known how blest I had been, and " how miserable, since her unhappy " end."

MATILDA made many attempts at offering consolation to her father, but her tongue refused its office, and she

sat in silence, drowned in tears, her gentle bosom heaving with convulsive sobs.

DUMAIN said, that he had an affair on his hands, that required his presence in another place, and that he would now leave them, asking Matilda, at what hour he must call, to conduct her home.

" TALK not of home," said she; " I " have no home, but where my father " is. This shall be my home. I will " not again leave him, till———till " what?——Oh! heaven!——" saying which, she threw herself into her father's arms, and silence again ensued. The Marquis first broke it, by desiring Dumain to call in the course of two or three hours.

As soon as they were alone, Matilda said, " Do not force me from your pre-
" sence, but let me stay with you. O,
" do not let us part again, my fa-
" ther!"

" It is, my dear, prudent that we
" should part; this place of horror,
" suits not with thy tender nerves. We
" shall meet again to-morrow. Heaven
" knows," continued he, " how much
" I dote upon my dearest child, and how
" my heart-strings crack, when I think
" of the eternal parting we must soon
" experience. 'Tis that, that alone,
" which occasions all the pangs I feel at
" death's approach. When I think of
" the storms of the villanous world,
" and the boisterous sea of troubles,
" and of woe, that may await my un-
" protected child, I own, I am unman'd.

" Were I assured, that she would have
" a friend to act a father's part to her,
" that would love her as her father lov-
" ed; and, with the same anxious care,
" would guard her from the ills of life,
" I should mount the scaffold with a
" lightened heart, and welcome the ap-
" proach of death, as a relief from the
" misery, I have long experienced here.
" But, when I think of the evils, she
" may be exposed to, I shudder at the
" apprehension."

THEN recollecting himself, he said,
" Let me not complain! we must trust
" in the protection of a merciful power
" above, in whose hands is the disposal
" of the events of man; whose goodness
" is ever prone to succour innocence and
" virtue. Trust in him, my child, in
" all your troubles, and all your dis-

" tress, and he will deliver you out of
" them, or teach you, with fortitude, to
" bear them. He will be a father to
" you, when you are deprived of me.
" He will be a protector, when I am
" removed from hence. When these
" eyes shall be closed, and no longer
" have power to watch you; when
" this tongue shall be for ever silent,
" and no longer be able to warn you
" against evil, which will quickly be
" the case, his never-sleeping vigilance
" will attend you, and his omniscience
" direct you. Put your trust in him,
" my child, and evil shall fly before
" you."

MATILDA listened with sorrowful attention, but had not power to speak. She sat in silence, with her eyes fixed upon him, streaming with tears, which

ever and anon, she lifted up to heaven, with fervent devotion; then casting them upon her father again, her bosom was ready to burst, with half suppressed sobs.

SEEING the state of her mind, he endeavoured to amuse her, by turning its direction another way, and conversed with apparent composure on matters of trifling import.

WHEN he had succeeded in allaying her excessive grief, he said, "The time "fast approaches, my dearest Matilda, "when your wretched father must close "his eyes for ever on this sublunary "world. In the final parting interview "we may have, on the last morning that "will ever dawn on the miserable murderer of your angelic mother, I may "not have collected spirits, sufficient

" to say to my darling child, what I
" would wish; or, you have the tran-
" quillity of mind, to enable you to lis-
" ten, with that attention, which under
" other circumstances, you would do.
" Let us, therefore, employ the present
" moments, in as profitable a way, as
" we can; me in giving, you in receiv-
" ing, the last instructions from a dying
" parent's lips."

MATILDA uttered a deep and heavy sigh, but was all attention to her father's voice.

" BE slow," he continued, " in
" forming your friendships; be first
" well acquainted with the temper, and
" disposition of the candidates for your
" regard, before you commit your
" thoughts to their keeping; and having

" once found an object worthy, be stea-
" dy in your attachment. A true friend
" is one of the first blessings of man-
" kind; a false, one of the greatest curs-
" es. When you have formed a valu-
" able connection, do not run the risk
" of dissolving its harmony, by any tri-
" fling mean deceits, which a generous
" mind would soar above; on the con-
" trary, if indiscretion and thought-
" lessness, should unfortunately lead
" you to any act against your friend,
" boldly avow it, and throw yourself
" upon his forgiveness; for if you should
" once be detected in an untruth, your
" credit for sincerity and veracity is lost,
" never to be regained.

" GUARD against the power of flatte-
" ry. Flattery is a potent engine of
" destruction, to a weak mind in parti-

" cular, whilst a mind of strength is
" ever proof against its baleful effects.
" Lend your ear sooner to a person,
" who has the ability and honesty to
" tell you the truth, though that truth
" may not be pleasing to you, than to
" one who is weak enough to feed your
" grief, or your disappointments in the
" world, by agreeing with the justice
" of your complaints; and is fool enough
" to build his hopes of obtaining your
" regard, by adding to your discon-
" tent, instead of advising you to strive,
" as is your duty, to bear up against it. I
" don't know whether such conduct be-
" trays a greater weakness in the fool
" that practises it, or in the feeble mind
" that suffers it to make an impression.

" Be moderately resolute in the opin-
" ions you may form; suffer not yourself

" to be influenced by every breath that
" blows, ever ready to receive the senti-
" ments of all who offer them, and ever
" ready to turn with the last. This
" discovers a pitiful weakness of mind,
" which I could wish you to avoid. By
" giving way to such conduct, you ac-
" quire a wavering habit, which de-
" stroys all confidence in your own abi-
" lities, and loses you the friendship of
" those, whose opinions you have ask-
" ed, and slighted. It would be better
" to do a little wrong, which may by ex-
" perience be repaired, and to enter
" boldly, and with energy, into any
" object you may have in view, than to
" halt between two opinions, till the
" advantage to be derived from it, be
" upon the wing; when, in your haste
" to overtake it, you may, probably,
" take the wrong road in your pursuit,

" and lose, for ever, the benefit you " sought.

" PURSUE the charitable dictates of " your mind, the extent of which I am " well acquainted with, and applaud: " for the exercise of your benevolence, " you will find yourself possessed of " ample means. Never forget, that " you are no more than a steward, and " hold the wealth you have, by the " permission of a superior power, who " will one day call upon you, for an " account of the expenditure of what " has been intrusted to your care. Be " not ostentatious in bestowing your " alms; rather seek modest merit in " obscurity, than openly display your " generosity, to catch the applause of " the world.———"

HERE he was interrupted, by the arrival of Dumain, who called to conduct Matilda back to her lodgings.

DURING the time that her father had been speaking, she appeared more composed than she had been before; but when she was reminded, that it was time to part for the night, her sorrow raged with increased violence. It was long before she could be convinced of the necessity of leaving the dismal place she was in. She, at last, with difficulty, summoned resolution enough, to bid her father good night, and was led, dissolved in tears, and sobbing aloud, by Dumain, to the *fiacre* that was in waiting for her.

CHAPTER VIII.

I am arm'd, and well prepar'd.

SHAKESPEAR.

THE next morning, Dumain again called upon her, and conducted her to the prison, where he left her till the evening.

SHE was more calm than the day before, and could attend to some directions her father gave her, relative to

some family concerns, which she promised she would see executed, in the manner he wished. A considerable time was taken up in conversation of this kind, which the Marquis purposely protracted, in order, as much as possible, to preserve the unexpected calmness, with which she seemed to be pervaded.

He thought, in the present state of her mind, she was more able to bear the pangs of a final parting, than she probably would be the next morning, when he must bid the world and her adieu for ever. He, therefore, mentioned to her, just before the time he expected Dumain to return, that it would be necessary she should arm herself with resolution, to bear the last farewell with fortitude.

THAT idea called up all her sorrow afresh.

SHE cried, "Oh! my father, the "thoughts of parting cut me to the "heart. To-morrow——! Oh, God! "Oh, God! That morrow must be the "last, that e'er these eyes shall be-"hold the revered, the beloved author "of my being! Must see him to-mor-"row, but to take an eternal farewell "of him! Oh God! teach me to bear "the terrible separation! Support me "under the dreadful trial!——To-mor-"row! Oh, dreadful, dreadful anticipa-"tion!

"I FEAR, my dear child," said the Marquis, "that a parting to-morrow "will be too much for either of us to "bear. Much as I should prize an

" interview then, I think it will be " more prudent to avoid it. There- " fore, let us——let us——part——to- " night——."

" To-NIGHT!" exclaimed Matilda, with emotion, bordering upon frenzy. " Part to-night?——Part to-night, for " ever? Oh, impossible! Oh! my fa- " ther, my dear, my dying father! " refuse not your Matilda her last re- " quest, but let me see you——Oh " heaven!——for the last time——to- " morrow——. She never before dis- " puted your commands, your wish was " always to her a law; but now, she " feels she must not, cannot, pay obe- " dience to your will. Oh! my dearest " father, consent that I shall see you to- " morrow!"

" Be calm, my dear ——," said the Marquis ——.

" Oh! drive me not to desperation, " but consent to my request," said she; " the only one I ever made against your " wish!"

" You was goodness ever, the pat- " tern of filial love and duty; an ex- " ample of affection, that fathers are " rarely blessed with! It is to save ad- " ditional pangs to both of us, that I " wished to take our last farewell to- " night. But I yield, and to-morrow it " shall be."

Matilda was unable to thank him in words. She clasped her arms about his shoulders, and hung in silence on

his neck, a crystal stream copiously flowing down her delicate cheek; whilst the starting tear glistened in the manly eye of the Marquis.

They were in this position, when Dumain entered, unobserved by them. They continued locked in each other's arms for some time, unconscious of the presence of a third person. At length, the Marquis recollected himself, and he saw Dumain. This interesting scene of silent sorrow, had reached his heart also, and he was wiping away the trickling dew, as it rolled down his cheek. He could not speak. The Marquis's bosom was overcharged, sending forth deep and heavy groans; whilst Matilda, who had thrown herself into a chair, sat motionless, with her eyes fixed towards heaven.

THE Marquis, at last, broke silence, and requested, that Dumain would attend his daughter, and conduct her to his prison the next morning.

THEN, turning to Matilda, he said, "I have, my dear, consented to "your request of visiting me in the "morning; yet still, I am fearful of the "consequence that may attend it. I "am fearful that it may be a trial, too "great for your strength to bear; but, "having acceded to your wish, it is "not my intention to retract. I have, "however, to conjure you, to endea-"vour to fortify your mind, before you "come, that you may be the better "able to sustain the shock."

MATILDA made several attempts to speak, but was unable to give utterance

to her ideas, her tears and sobs overpowering her speech. After being again locked in her father's embrace for a considerable time, she departed with Dumain, stopping at the door, to take another parting look; she was then led to the *fiacre*, which drove to her lodgings.

THE melancholy state of her mind, would not suffer her to go to bed, and she sat up in a chair during the night.

THE dawn of day broke heavily through the murky clouds, which hung with a lowering aspect. The sun refused to shew his refulgent brightness, emitting through the darkened air, a gloomy light, seeming to mourn the fate of the unhappy Marquis de Chalons.

Dumain called at the appointed hour, and they drove to the prison. The massy key turned in the lock; the heavy bolts flew back, when the door opened, and they went to the Marquis's apartment. They found him sitting at a table, intent upon a book, on which his eyes were fixed, except at intervals, that they were raised towards heaven, when a faint smile of resignation and of peace, irradiated his countenance; the effect of the trust he reposed in his Maker and Redeemer.

The calmness and tranquillity, that appeared to reign within his breast, imparted a degree of serenity to the bosom of Matilda, which she did not expect she should experience. She did not disturb the devotion of her father, but waited at the door till he had finish-

ed, when Dumain and she entered. She approached him with a steadiness of manner, that seemed to denote she had formed a resolution, not to add to the pangs he must feel, in the hour of their last sad and irrevocable parting.

A DEEP and solemn toll of the sullen bell, dispersed her apparently collected spirits. She started at the awful sound. A pallid hue of sickness overspread her face, and her whole frame shook with agitation and emotion. Another toll, louder and deeper, succeeded the first; and another followed.

THROWING her snowy arms around the Marquis's neck, she cried, " Oh! " my father, my father!" and sunk in his arms, in a swoon.

When she recovered, the Marquis said, "My dear child, I could have "wished, on your account, this inter- "view to have been avoided; but, as "we have met, we must make the most "of the few short moments allowed, "and take an everlasting farewell. "Oh! my child! in this awful mo- "ment, with my inward eyes fixed "upon eternity, I feel not a pang but "for you. Death, arrayed in all his "terror, carries not a sting to me, but "in the idea of leaving you unprotect- "ed, in a world of wickedness and "woe."

Matilda's silent sorrow, and her wistful looks in her father's face, were more expressive of her feelings, than words could have been, had she had

the use of speech, which was then denied her.

THE bell again sent forth its solemn sound.

"I AM reminded," said the Marquis, "that my time is short."

THEN, clasping Matilda in his arms, with a faltering accent, said, "Fare-"well, farewell,——my dearest child. "May the God of Heaven protect "thee!"

MATILDA laboured hard to speak; at length, with difficulty, she said, "My dearest, dearest father! Oh!— "Farewell!" and again fell into his arms.

THE officers now appeared at the door, and told the Marquis all was ready.

" I ATTEND," said he.

ON hearing this, Matilda started up, and franticly cried, " They shall not " part us; cruel, cruel men! I will die " with him!" and catching hold of the skirt of his coat, as if to prevent him from going, fell again into a swoon, and was, in that state, conveyed to her lodgings.

THE Marquis had prepared his mind, to meet with fortitude the awful fate that awaited him; but the agitation of his daughter, had scattered his spirits, and he requested the officer to allow him an hour to endeavour to recal them;

which was readily granted. This time he employed alone in his room, in private meditation. The officer again made his appearance at the door, and the Marquis rose to attend him.

THE solemn procession moved slowly along the gloomy passage, the clapper beating, in awful sounds, against the brazen bell. It entered the court-yard, where the scaffold was erected, with all the terrible implements of death upon it. The Marquis ascended with footsteps firm, and viewed the horrible preparation with a steady eye. He prepared to meet the fatal stroke with fortitude. He mentally ejaculated a short prayer, and bowed his head as a token that he was ready.

ALL at once his attention was ar-

rested by the sound of a shrill distant voice.——

It was Matilda's. She was seen endeavouring to force her way through the crowd, crying " Where is he?—Where " is he?—Let me fly to him?"

She reached the foot of the scaffold, the steps of which she quickly ascended. She ran to her father, calling out, with frantic joy, " She lives, she lives; " Oh! my mother lives!" and fell into his arms, overcome with the hurry and agitation of her spirits.

" What means my child?" said the Marquis. " Alas? grief has disordered " her senses. This, in my last mo- " ments, is a sight of woe indeed!"

THERE was now a cry in the crowd, of, "Make room, make room!" and a person was observed, pushing through the throng. He made his way to the scaffold, and delivered to the officer on duty, an order to stay the execution, and to take the Marquis back into the prison.

CHAPTER IX.

Hopeless to find, yet loth to leave unsought.

SHAKESPEAR.

THE Marquis de Chalons and his daughter returned to the room, from whence he had just before departed, as he supposed for the last time; where we will for the present leave them, to account for the cause of the abrupt appearance of Matilda on the scaffold, just in time to save the life of her father,

whose soul, in another minute, would have passed, irrevocably, eternity's awful gulph.

By the time she got home, she had recovered from the swoon in which she was, when she was carried out of the prison. She found Count Troyes waiting for her, to offer her what consolation was in his power, in her present distressed situation.

He saw upon the table some papers, which lay in a loose and irregular manner; the sorrow and grief, with which Matilda had been oppressed, since her arrival at Paris, having prevented her from looking over them; not paying attention to any thing, which was not immediately connected with what

concerned her father's unhappy condition.

AMONGST them, he cast his eyes upon one, which was superscribed, " To " Mons. Montfort; to be kept with the " greatest care, till punctually deliver- " ed into his hands; which must be " done as early as possible, as the con- " tents are of the utmost consequence, " to him, as well as to another.

HE pointed it out to Matilda on her return, and asked her if her father had seen it. Being answered in the negative, and knowing, if the contents were of any moment to the Marquis in his present melancholy situation, that no time was to be lost in ceremony, hastily broke the seal, and read as follows:

" My dear Chalons,

" I am now lying upon a
" bed of sickness, from which it is not
" probable, I shall ever rise; and,
" therefore, wish to impart to you a
" secret, that in justice to one, who was
" once most deservedly dear to you, it
" is necessary you should be acquaint-
" ed with.

" Your injured wife is innocent of
" the crime you supposed her guilty of;
" and is now living, having survived the
" wound you meant should deprive her
" of life. But though she is still in this
" world, she is, and must remain dead
" to you, as she has not disclosed the
" place of her retirement, even to me;

" to whom she has lately written a let-
" ter, requesting me to inform you that
" she has bid a final adieu to that world,
" in which she has experienced such un-
" merited treatment.

" THE letter is meant, chiefly, to res-
" cue her name from the dishonour that
" she fears will attach upon it, by the
" manner in which you attempted her
" death; as the world will not believe,
" but that some flagrant act of vice was
" the cause of it. She protests in a
" manner the most solemn, and by eve-
" ry sacred tie of religion, that she was
" never false to you; that she never in-
" jured you, even in thought; and,
" that at the time she is writing, she
" dotes on you, though she has vowed
" never more to have converse with
" you.

" She says, that she has fixed her " residence in a place, where, it is " scarcely possible, the most diligent " search should ever discover her, and " she has, therefore, no anxiety, on " that account."

This letter was signed by the Countess Villeroy, and was the same she had mentioned to Matilda in her illness. Count Troyes ran with it to the Minister, to obtain an order to stop the execution; which was granted, till the truth of the Marchioness being alive, should be ascertained. In the mean while, Matilda flew to her father, with the joyful intelligence, which the distress of mind she had been in, had been the cause of keeping back from him before.

Count Troyes and Dumain entered the room, soon after the Marquis and his daughter, to congratulate him on the discovery that had been made; and to concert with him, measures to be pursued, towards finding out the retreat of the Marchioness. This was necessary, that living proof might be brought forward of her existence; or, at least, that she did not die, of the wound that he had inflicted, as without this, he could not obtain his liberty. They spent much time in consultation, but could not think of any plan, by which it was likely to discover the place she had retired to. They thought some monastery the most probable, as she had mentioned in her letter to the Countess Villeroy, that she had taken a final adieu of the world.

Both Count Troyes and Dumain offered their services to take different routes, and visit every convent that they came near, inquiring at each, if she was within their holy walls. They determined, immediately, to put in practice this resolution, that the Marquis might be released from his present restraint, and restored again to the world, with a mind more at ease, than he had for years experienced.

Since the probability of the Marchioness not having fallen by his sword was known, he had apartments allotted to him, which were sufficiently commodious to admit of his daughter's constant residence there. She accordingly passed nearly the whole of her time with him, striving by every endearing attention in her power to render

his imprisonment less irksome. In this laudable intention she could not fail to succeed, as it was not more her natural inclination and wish, to smooth his rugged pillow, and soften his tedious, melancholy hours of gloomy captivity, than it was her father's solace and comfort, to enjoy her tender and affectionate zeal.

The natural philanthropy of the minds of both the Marquis, and his lovely daughter, shone with the same refulgence, even in the dismal walls of a jail, as they had displayed, in whatever situation they had been.

He visited and relieved the distressed and wretched prisoners, many of whom, were pining in want and misery, with scarcely clothes to defend them from

the piercing rigour of the winter's cold, or bed to lie on, save a scanty handful of straw, which was thinly scattered on the paved floor of the darksome cell, the abode of wretchedness and woe. Groans echoing responsive through the arched vaults, and the dismal clanking of heavy chains, were all the sounds to be heard, except when the ruthless jailer brought their sparing meals, the doors creaked upon their rusty hinges, and the massy keys turned back the ponderous bolts into the sockets, the grating noise of which, served to add horror to the already horrible place. Chalons felt for their misery, and relieved it, as much as wretched minds like their's could receive relief.

WHILST the Marquis was so em-

ployed, Matilda found objects of compassion among the prisoners of the female sex, many of whom she raised from the deepest misery, and gnawing want, to a state of comparative comfort and sufficiency.

CHAPTER X.

..... So you serve us,
Till we serve you: but when you have our roses,
You barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves,
And mock us with our bareness.

SHAKESPEAR.

AMONG those, to whom Matilda, with a liberal hand, dispensed her daily bounty, was a young female, whose face she thought she had some knowledge of, but could not call to her recollection where she had seen her.

One day she took her aside, and, when they were alone, questioned her as to her former mode of life, when she found her to be the young woman, who had been in the house that Longuaville conveyed her to, when he forcibly carried her off, from the *Boulevards*, in a *fiacre;* at the time that Jaques had conducted her to Paris, from the cottage of Le Pui, and, when the accident the carriage met with, was the cause of her losing him.

She requested to know, what it was that had occasioned such an alteration in her circumstances, as to make her an unwilling inhabitant of the gloomy walls of a prison. When she saw her before, she was full of spirits; apparently, full of health; and, the gaiety of

her manners, seemed to denote a heart devoid of care.

" ALAS!" said the young prisoner, " at the time that you thought me in " the possession of spirits, health, and " gaiety, I was a prey to melancholy, a " victim to disease, and borne down " by grief and dejection of mind. My " false spirits were the effect of ruinous " *liqueurs;* my apparent health, was " caused by the counterfeit colour of " my cheek; and, my gaiety was forced " for a while, but to leave me after- " wards, the picture of unhappiness " and misery.

" BELIEVE me, there is no life so " truly wretched, as the one I have " been doomed to pass my time in, for " some years back. O, man, for what

" have you to answer!—Allured by your
" wiles; enticed by your stratagems;
" deceived by your silvery, deceitful
" tongue; you drew me from innocence
" and a cottage, to enter a world I was
" never meant, but at a distance, to
" view.

" The dazzling prospect before my
" eyes, turned wild the senses, and I
" was led on, step by step, till I fell into
" the abyss of pleasure, and of vice.
" Fell, alas! to rise no more, but to end
" my days in bitterness and woe; in
" the painful decrepitude, and enervat-
" ing weakness of premature old age,
" added to the pangs of an ever-sting-
" ing conscience, and the punishment
" the law inflicts for those crimes,
" which are generally attendant, sooner
" or later, upon the lives of the wretch-

" ed class of beings to which I lately
" belonged.

" I AM the only child of a poor cotta-
" ger, in the province of Dauphiny.
" I was his comfort in his leisure hours,
" his happiness being centred in me,
" particularly, after the death of my
" mother, whose exact resemblance, he
" said, I was.

" As I grew up, his fondness for me,
" if possible, increased; so, that he
" was always uneasy unless I was
" with him. His affection for me
" was unbounded, and he deserved
" from me, all the return it was my du-
" ty to feel for him; all which I did
" feel, till I was, by Baron Longuaville,
" seduced from home, and brought to

" this scene of corruption and vice,
" where he introduced me into that
" kind of company, that soon, by their
" conversation and example, sunk me
" into a state, as miserable and abject
" as themselves.

" THE life that I had now entered
" upon, had all the charms of novelty
" to recommend it. I was decked out
" in gay apparel, such as I had never
" before, but at an humble distance
" seen; and never contemplated, as
" being the wearer of myself. My beau-
" ty was the theme of amazement of all
" the men I met with, my sprightly
" wit their admiration, and my taste
" their praise. This adoration intoxica-
" ted my weak brain, and I was the
" dupe of their wicked designs.

" I LIVED some time the favourite
" of Longuaville; who, at length, get-
" ting tired of me, without any cere-
" mony, turned me out of the house
" into the streets of Paris, to shift for
" myself as I could.

" I WAS now in a most pitiable situa-
" tion. I knew not where to direct
" my steps. I dared not think of going
" home to my injured and neglected fa-
" ther; I wandered about, night after
" night, almost perishing with hunger,
" till the necessities of nature were so
" craving, that I was obliged to barter
" my person for food to eat.

" AH! little do the innocent and vir-
" tuous know, what the wicked and de-
" praved suffer! I was now obliged to

" associate with the lowest, and most
" wretched of the female sex. At one
" time, I have been hired out to fill the
" arms of wealthy drunkenness, and
" been subject to his brutal passions,
" often running a risk of my life.
" Whilst at others, I have been lying
" under the torturing pain of loathsome
" disease, praying that the next mo-
" ment might be the last of my suffer-
" ings and woe, by an end being put
" to my life and them at once.

" At last, I was reduced to so low a
" state of poverty and distress, that im-
" pelled by hunger, I was induced to
" put my hand into the pocket of a
" gentleman, and take his purse. He
" caught me in the act of drawing it
" out. I was taken before a magis-

" trate of the police, and was sent
" here, previous to taking my trial for
" the offence. I expect to be convict-
" ed, and to end those days in ignomi-
" ny and disgrace, that have been spent
" in wretchedness and vice.

" Oh! how I have, when too late,
" lamented my deviation from the paths
" of innocence and virtue! Often, when
" I have lain upon a bed of sickness
" and disease, or after the fallacious
" pleasures of the last few hours, have
" I wished I could recal my past days,
" for ever fled, and with them, all my
" comfort, and all my peace of mind.
" Comfort and peace, are for ever ban-
" ished this vicious bosom, whilst cor-
" roding guilt, and hopeless despair,
" have taken possession there."

As Matilda left this victim to unlawful pleasures, she exclaimed to herself,——" How just are the ways of " Providence, turning our pursuits of " forbidden gratifications, into the " immediate means of our punish- " ment."

CHAPTER XI.

..... Be moderate, allay thy ecstacy,
In measure rein thy joy.

SHAKESPEAR.

THE Marquis de Chalons now passed his time with greater comfort, than he had long experienced. He was one day sitting with Matilda, engaged in conversation upon indifferent subjects, when Count Troyes entered his apart-

ment, with a gay air, which appeared to be the prelude to some joyful news he had to impart; which he by degrees unfolded to the Marquis, giving him, in the end, to understand, that the Marchioness was then in Paris.

He felt more agitated than he had ever done before. The joy, that the life of his ever dear Maria, had been spared from his assassinating sword, with the dread of meeting her justly offended eye, was more than he could support. These contending passions, raised a conflict in his breast, that he could not overcome, and he sunk in a chair, for a while, motionless.

At length, he exclaimed, "Oh! how "shall I dare to meet that injured ex-

" cellence! These eyes, like basilisks,
" will commit murder anew, by barely
" looking on her."

THEN he exclaimed, in a frantic tone, " Impossible, impossible,——Oh!
" 'tis impossible she can ever forgive
" me! I will not dare to meet the in-
" jured sufferer, whose look will dart to
" my convicted soul, arrows of poison,
" that will overwhelm me with con-
" scious guilt and merited dismay."

COUNT Troyes begged him to calm his disturbed thoughts. He assured him, that the Marchioness was the same excellent woman that she ever was; that the whole of the imposition, practised upon him by Saint Fleur, and his associates, had been explained to her, and that she was ready, and anxious,

to bury all the past in eternal oblivion, and to throw herself into his arms, with love increased, if possible, from their long and involuntary separation.

The Marquis was by this assurance rendered more quiet, but would not consent, that the tender nerves of the Marchioness should be shocked by her introduction into such a dismal place as he was then an inhabitant of. Count Troyes, therefore, undertook to see the Cardinal minister; and, through him, to procure his release from the place of horror in which he was confined.

In the mean time, Matilda's bosom was racked, between her wish to pay her duty to, and throw herself at the feet of a mother she had never seen, and her attention to her dearest father, who

now, as much as ever, required all the solace that could be administered to his distracted mind.

THE Marquis, seeing the conflict with which she was agitated, said to her, "My dear, I think it would be more "congenial to your mother's feel- "ings, to prepare her mind to meet "the offending author of the many "woes she must have suffered, by em- "bracing first her child, whom she has "not seen since she was in her nurse's "arms. The meeting of both at once, "may be too much for her delicate "frame to bear. If, therefore, Count "Troyes will introduce you, I will, in "the mean time, prepare myself for the "meeting that will follow."

MATILDA, taking her father's hand,

pressed it to her lips, and, with tears of joy and anticipated happiness, departed with the Count, for the hotel at which the Marchioness had taken up her residence.

THE Count went first into the room, to announce the approach of her daughter, who, soon after, entered, with trembling, agitated steps.

THE idea of meeting a parent, whom she had never known, scarcely even ever heard mentioned, and of whose endearing and affectionate care she had, through unfortunate circumstances, been deprived, caused a pleasing emotion in Matilda's breast, which rendered her, for some time, unable to advance.

COUNT Troyes took her by the hand,

and led her to the Marchioness, who exclaimed, with surprise, "Good Hea- "ven! Matilda! Are you my daugh- "ter? Are you,—are you,—indeed— "my daughter?"

MATILDA flew with eager transport, and threw herself at the feet of her mother, who raising her up, catched her in her arms; and they were locked in the embraces of each other, without the power of speech.

AT length, the Marchioness, gently disengaging herself, gazed on her with rapture, crying out,—"My daughter, "my daughter!" And again they were locked in each other's arms.

AFTER some time, again spent in impressive silence, she said, "Heaven has

" been more kind to me, than I had
" dared to hope. Often, very often,
" have I wished that Matilda was my
" daughter, when I thought such an
" event out of the scope of possibility.
" To find your dear father's act against
" my life, was an unblameable one on
" his side, being the work of dark and
" base imposition; and, at the same in-
" stant, to find such a daughter, over-
" pay me abundantly for all my past
" sorrow. Amply am I repaid for all
" my woe!"

" My mother!" said Matilda,——
" Mother! Blessed, heavenly sound!
" A sound to which this tongue, from
" its infant state, since first it was
" taught to lisp, has been a stranger;
" and, now, for the first time, to be pri-
" vileged to use it to one whom, of all

" created beings, had I the power, I
" would have selected for a parent, is
" joy unlooked for!—Delightful bliss!
" Happiness on earth complete!—To
" see a dear father rescued from an im-
" pending, ignominious death; to find
" him innocent of the crime with which
" he was charged; to see his long-
" perturbed bosom, once more restored
" to happiness and peace; is felicity
" indeed! And, in addition to a dear
" father's happiness, to have a long-lost
" mother restored; restored immacu-
" late, to bid defiance to base detrac-
" tion's foul-mouthed calumny, is bliss
" and happiness, more than human!
" ——That lengthened years of com-
" fort, and of joy, may repay my dear-
" est parents, for all their troubles past,
" shall be the constant prayer of their
" Matilda!"

" My child," said the Marchioness, " it is the duty of mortals to bow with " submission and obedience to the will " of a Power superior. However in- " scrutable to human wisdom—limited " in its extent—we may rest assured, " that we are afflicted with sorrow, and " with trouble, for a wise and benefi- " cent end; that innocence oppressed " is ever the care of his unceasing " watchfulness; and that, sooner or lat- " er, it will meet with its recompence. " I feel myself already repaid, for the " calamity and woe I have experien- " ced, by the assurance that your fa- " ther's love for me felt no abatement, " even at the time he was, by gross " imposition, led to lift his arm against " my life. The grief that has ever since " corroded his bosom, is proof that his " heart did not willingly consent to the

" action of his hand.——But, when
" may I expect him here? I am anxious
" to throw myself into his arms, and
" shew him, that so far from harbour-
" ing resentment, I entertain the same
" pure affection for him, that I ever
" shewed him, or ever felt."

MATILDA told her mother, that as soon as Count Troyes had brought her into the room, it was his intention to go to Cardinal Mazarin, to procure the liberty of her father, and that he might be every minute expected at the hotel. The Marchioness would willingly have gone to him in the prison; but when she understood that he wished otherwise, she gave up her inclination, and waited for him where she was, with the greatest impatience.

In the mean time, Count Troyes went to procure the discharge of the Marquis, that he might leave the dismal place, of which he had, unfortunately, been so long an inhabitant. He met with an unexpected delay, as the Cardinal was gone to attend upon the King, at Marli, to which place he immediately followed him.

The Marquis, as well as the Marchioness, were, all this time, in a state of the greatest anxiety of mind. That of the latter, indeed, was somewhat diverted from the suspense, by the presence, and the valued converse of her dear new-found daughter. But the former felt the greatest disquietude. Anticipated joy, at one time, took possession of his heart; but the thought of the injury he had done the ever dear

object of his sincere affection, would damp the transport that he felt, and sink him in doubt and uncertainty, as to the state of her thoughts towards him. Then, his spirits were again raised, when he recollected the assurance that Count Troyes had given him, that she was convinced of the imposition which had been practised on his senses, and that she was anxious to throw herself into his arms, and to acknowledge to him, that she felt the same attachment she had ever done before.

ALTERNATE joy, at the idea of again clasping to his bosom his dearest Maria; and dread, lest she should not receive him in the manner that he hoped, caused a commotion in his breast, that nothing could allay, but the wished-for awful interview.

In this state of mind he passed the time, during the absence of Count Troyes. He thought the hours crept tardily on; the index of time, that moves rapidly round the dial, seemed to approach slowly and feebly, towards each division, and the interval was lengthened, in his idea, to an unthought of extent.

When the Count arrived, he brought with him an order for the release of the Marquis, from all power the law had over him, on account of the supposed murder of his wife. They left the gloomy mansion of misery and wretchedness, and entering a *fiacre*, they soon arrived within sight of the hotel, where the Marchioness had taken up her abode.

The nearer he approached the expected interview, the more he found the

conflict rage within him. The Count used all the methods in his power to allay the emotion, but could not wholly succeed, although he again assured his friend, that the Marchioness did not feel any symptoms of resentment towards him; on the contrary, that she was all love, and impatience to see him.

"IT is not," said the Marquis, "the goodness of her excellent heart, "which, I am convinced, never dictated any sentiments but those of "purity and truth, and that was ever a "stranger to resentment or revenge, "that can be an excuse for my rash "and unadvised conduct to her. Nay, "it is an aggravation of my guilt: I "ought to have been assured, that so "much goodness could not err, in a "point so decidedly against every law,

" human and divine. No, the more " her charity leads her to make excuses " for the man that injured her, the more " atrocious does the act appear in my " eyes. Her philanthropy may cause " her to forgive me, but my own mind " can never lead me to forgive myself."

THE *fiacre* now drew up at the hotel, and they alighted. The Count went first, to prepare the Marchioness for the immediate approach of the Marquis, whilst he retired, for a few minutes, into a private room, to endeavour to collect his scattered spirits, and to arm himself for the meeting. The Count shortly returned, and his friend accompanied him, with a tottering frame, and with agitated steps, into the apartment where she and Matilda were.

CHAPTER XII.

..... On earth
There breathes not a more happy than himself:
..... love o'erflows ....;
And, love o'erflowing, makes an angel here.

YOUNG.

THE Count opened the door, and the Marquis entered.

"MARIA!" he cried, in a tremulous voice, as he went up to her.

"MY still, as ever, dear Chalons—!"

She could no more, but threw her arms about his shoulders, where she hung in involuntary silence. Tears of joy trickled down her cheek, which the Marquis, as unable to speak as she was, kissed away as they fell from her glistening eye. At length, he led her to the chair she had risen from, on his entrance, and seated himself by her, with Matilda on the other side.

He sat some time, gazing in silent ecstacy on her face; then, taking her hand, which he pressed with fervour to his lips, he said, "Can you——can you "——forgive me?——Can you, Maria, "forgive the assassin, that sought your "precious life?"

"There is no cause for forgiveness, "where the heart never erred," said

she. " I have been informed of all " the base and treacherous arts, that " were used against us both; and, so " far from blaming you, I blame my- " self, that I did not endeavour to open " your eyes, respecting the views, " which I suspected, of Saint Fleur; " from which nothing could have de- " terred me, but the fear of your life, " ever dearer than my own."

" This goodness overpowers me. Oh! " what sufferings, and what woe have I " caused that angelic bosom!"

" No more, my Chalons, let us not " embitter the present moments by the " recollection of the past. Believe me, " I feel more real joy at this happy " meeting, than I ever experienced, " even in the blossom of our loves."

" Goodness and truth ever reigned
" triumphant in that excellent heart;
" nor injuries, or calamities, have been
" able to erase them. Oh, Maria!
" how could I lift my hand against that
" life, which, not a minute before, nor
" principalities or empires, could have
" bribed me to have done! Heaven
" can witness, I have not since known
" a happy hour; except that, at times,
" my little cherub here,"—taking Matilda by the hand, when she lifted his to her lips, with silent, but ardent affection.——" except," he resumed,
" when my little cherub reminded
" me of her angelic mother's charms.
" Then in spite of the deep-rooted me-
" lancholy, which corroded my gnawing
" bosom, a transient gleam of happiness
" would glance across my soul, and,

" on its subsiding, leave me again sunk
" deeper still in misery."

" AWAY with these melancholy
" ideas," said the Marchioness; " let
" them vanish with the cause that
" gave them birth. I hope and trust,
" that the days before us will make
" amends for the gloom, which has
" hung over the past. Bright sunshine
" will succeed the clouds and darkness,
" in which we have been enveloped,
" and our future time be spent in ration-
" al joy, and well-attempered pleasure.
" Look at our charming daughter, have
" we not reason abundant, to be thank-
" ful for such a treasure: and reason to
" anticipate comfort and satisfaction,
" from her tenderness and duty, as
" well as from her many other excel-

" lent qualifications? Let us then, my
" dearest Chalons, bury mope-eyed me-
" lancholy oblivious in the past, and in
" the future, hope to find happiness and
" joy."

" MATILDA," said the Marquis, " is
" like yourself, all goodness, all affec-
" tion; she has been my only solace,
" my only comfort, in this irksome time
" of our separation. Her smiles, alone,
" have animated my bosom, and her
" acts of beneficence and charity, to
" those that stood in need of them,
" have cheered my aching heart.

" I LOOK forward now," continued the Marquis, " to many days of happi-
" ness and comfort, that once I did not
" expect ever to taste again. To find

" my dearest Maria, still retaining all
" her excellence; still retaining her love
" for her once unhappy Chalons; and
" the possession of a daughter, endow-
" ed with every qualification, that pa-
" rent could desire, are sources of plea-
" sure, and of joy, which it would be
" ingratitude in the extreme, not to
" look upon with thankfulness, and not
" to consider, as ample compensation
" for all my trouble past."

MATILDA sat with eyes overflowing with tears of pleasure, in witnessing the happiness, that appeared to pervade the hearts of her father and her mother.—She took hold of a hand of each, which she bedewed with the pearly drops, that distilled from her sparkling eyes, and kissing them alternately with rapture,

exclaimed, " Oh! I am too, too happy!
" Never did I expect to enjoy bliss like
" this! To have restored to me, my
" ever loved and revered father, and to
" find in my mother, the person, for
" whom my soul had formed a strong and
" unalterable affection, when I knew
" not who she was, is happiness that
" I dared not to hope for here!"

" How! said the Marquis, " did you
" then know your dear mother, before
" this meeting?"

" She did," said the Marchioness,
" but knew not that I was her mother,
" more than I knew she was my daugh-
" ter. We met by accident; and no soon-
" er saw, than the silent whispers of at-
" tractive nature bound us to each other,
"and we were never happy but when

" together. I often wished that heaven " had given me such a daughter, and " Matilda as frequently, that I could " be her mother, without either of us " thinking it possible, that such an " event could happen."

Upon the Marquis inquiring where they had met, the Marchioness said, that after she had received the wound, she lay some time in a state of insensibility. When she came to herself, she found that she was in the house of an old servant, who had accompanied her from Spain. She was attended by a surgeon, from whom she soon understood, that her wound was not of a serious nature.

As she did not know the motives, by which the Marquis was actuated in his

attempt upon her life, as soon as she was able to undertake a journey, she determined to quit Paris for ever. The old servant, at whose house she then was, offered to accompany her; and at the same time, mentioned a relation that she had, who resided near the base of the Pyrenees, in the province of Gascony, at whose house they might live, till the Marchioness could find a situation, that would suit her wishes.

THITHER she went, and took upon her the name of Madame Evreux. A short time after her arrival, the old servant died, and she then took the cottage, at which Matilda found her, as she was, by chance, rambling up the mountain's side, from the Chevalier Melun's *chateau*, which was situated at the bottom of it, in Bigorre.

To go on with that part of the history, we must relate an account of the retreat of the Marchioness being discovered, and of her arrival so quickly in Paris, after it was known that she had not lost her life by the sword of the Marquis.

When Filesac was wounded on the Pyrenees by two men, in their attempt to rob him of some money he had been receiving for Baron Longuaville, and was taken into the cottage of Madame Evreux, he immediately recognized the person of the Marchioness de Chalons, although he was not known by her.

When, therefore, he arrived at Paris, and heard the situation that the Marquis was in, he offered his services to Count Troyes, to visit the place of the Mar-

chioness's retirement; as, in all probability, she still resided upon the same spot.

He accordingly set out, unknown either to Matilda, or her father; and arriving on the mountain's side, soon found Madame. He made known to her the object of his journey, and explained the imposition that had been practised upon the Marquis, through which alone it was, that he had been induced to lift his sword against her; and told her that his life had since, been a continued series of melancholy and grief.

He then acquainted her with the Marquis's trial, at the accusation of Longuaville; of his conviction; and of the letter that had been found, written by the late Countess Villeroy to him, which had been the cause of staying the

execution of the sentence of the law; but that he could not obtain his liberty, until it could be ascertained that she was living; or, if otherwise, that she did not die in consequence of the wound of his sword.

THE Marchioness, upon hearing the situation in which the Marquis stood, and that his attempt upon her life was the effect of the villany and imposition of Saint Fleur, did not hesitate a moment; but left the retirement she had so long buried herself in, among the groves on the side of the towering Pyrenees, and hastened to Paris with all the speed she possibly could.

HERE she arrived; and by her presence, was the cause of releasing from his bonds, her ever-valued husband;

and, to embrace with all the fervour of parental affection, a daughter, for whom she had, by the powerful dictates of nature, felt a mother's fondness, without knowing that she had a mother's claim.

The Marquis now lost all his former melancholy and dejection of spirits, and, by degrees the effect of them; retaining nothing of his old disposition, but his philanthropy, and unbounded goodness of heart, which had always been the source of benevolence and charity, in every situation of his life.

CHAPTER XIII.

..... Guilt begun, must fly
To guilt consummate to be safe.

YOUNG.

OWING to the time of Dumain being so fully occupied, by his endeavours to alleviate the misery of Matilda and her father, he was prevented from attending the court, on the day of the trial of Saint Fleur. On calling, however, upon Lacroix afterwards, he re-

ceived a full account of the proceedings. He listened attentively to the narrative, shewing the sense of horror, with which his breast was pervaded, at the numerous vicious and atrocious acts of wickedness and villany, of which he had been guilty. In addition to which, when he heard the contents of the paper that led to the trial, he exhibited strong marks of astonishment and surprise; and abruptly took his departure, in aparently the greatest perturbation of mind.

When he left Lacroix, he went to seek Lebrun, with whom he had a long conversation, the result of which was, that they agreed to call upon Filesac, who had just arrived at Paris.—Upon going to his lodgings, they found that he had again left town, but could

not learn for what part. However, they met there old Dumain, whom Filesac had brought up with him, from the vale Le Pui; to which place he immediately went, when he left Langres.

It was this business which caused the long detention of Dumain, at the time he kept Matilda waiting for him, when he accompanied her, the first time she went to the prison of the Marquis.

As soon as the old man saw the younger Dumain enter, he betrayed evident signs of emotion. He fell at his feet and begged forgiveness.

"Rise, rise," said Dumain, "it ill "becomes a son to suffer a father

" to kneel at his feet, let the fact for
" which he claims forgiveness be what
" it may."

" You are not," said the old man,
" as you always supposed, my son, but
" you are the rightful heir to the mur-
" dered Baron Longuaville; basely
" murdered by his cruel, unrelenting
" relative, in the old castle of Saint
" Aubyn. Wretch that I am! I was
" assisting in conveying him to that dis-
" mal place of death ——."

Dumain turned from him with sensations of horror.

" You have reason," continued the old man, " to be shocked at my con-
" duct; yet, when you come to know
" that I saved your life, at the risk of

" my own, you may feel yourself in-
" clined to abate something of that ab-
" horrence, which has naturally taken
" possession of your mind."

DUMAIN desired him to proceed.

" IN the short tale, I have to tell," he continued, " I may be obliged still " more to harrow up your feelings."

DUMAIN again desired him to proceed, without any further preface.

" I WAS," said he, " an early asso-
" ciate of the Chevallier Saint Fleur.—
" I was a companion in his pleasures,
" and an accomplice in his crimes. It
" is irrelevant to the present subject,
" to mention the many atrocious acts

" of wickedness, in which he has been
" concerned. I shall, therefore, con-
" fine myself to what immediately re-
" lates to you."

" At the time, that he resolved up-
" on the death of the Baron, he men-
" tioned his intention to me, and said,
" that he had fixed upon Lebrun and
" me, to put it in execution. I made
" some objections, and endeavoured to
" dissuade him from his purpose; the
" consequence of which was, that he
" threatened me with destruction, if I
" hesitated to follow his directions.—
" I dared but obey, and I promised
" submission to his will. I found after-
" wards, that Lebrun had more courage
" than I, and that he had peremptorily
" refused to be concerned in this unna-
" tural murder.

" SAINT Fleur then changed his plan,
" from instant death, to a lingering and
" more horrible one; that of being
" starved, through the want of nutri-
" ment.

" THERE was another crime he com-
" mitted, of no less black a dye, which
" was only the precursor to this; and
" the success attending the perpetration
" of which it was, that led him on, to
" the Baron's murder.

" SAINT Fleur, who could not con-
" troul his guilty passions, when once
" they got possession of his heart, had
" beheld the Baroness Longuaville with
" a lustful eye. He had made many at-
" tempts on her chastity, but all to no
" purpose. She threatened to inform
" the Baron of his conduct. His friend-

" ship was of too great a value to
" run any risk of forfeiting it, as it
" was by his liberality, that he sup-
" ported the figure in life he had long
" done. This threat, therefore, operat-
" ed upon him, for a time, so as to free
" the Baroness from his importunities,
" and, she thought that he had conquer-
" ed his desires.

" She was, however, mistaken, as
" his passions only lay dormant for a
" while, to break out again with in-
" creased force. He took an opportu-
" nity, when he knew the Baron was
" from home, to call at his *chateau*,
" when he found the Baroness alone.
" He was heated with wine, and his un-
" lawful suit being again rejected,
" with every feeling of just indignation,
" he proceeded to take those liberties

" by force, which she denied to his so-
" licitations. Her cries brought to her
" assistance a female attendant, who
" was waiting in an antichamber, when
" he thought fit to desist from his at-
" tempt.

" The Baroness desired him instant-
" ly to quit the *chateau*, declaring, that
" no consideration whatever, should
" longer prevent her, from informing
" the Baron of his villanous conduct;
" of which, she said, she was glad she
" had a witness, in the person of her
" maid.

" He now attempted, in vain, to as-
" suage her anger. She repeated, that
" she would, the moment the Baron
" returned, acquaint him with every
" part of his conduct to her. This,

" Saint Fleur knew, would be ruin to
" him, and he determined, at all events,
" to prevent it. He turned over many
" schemes in his mind, but could not
" fix upon any that would answer the
" purpose, but that of persuading her,
" that he felt sincere contrition for his
" repeated insults to her, and hoped she
" would attribute the last, to the effect
" of the wine he had drank.

" He had proceeded too far; she
" was deaf to all his protestations of re-
" pentance, and persevered in her in-
" tentions of informing the Baron, as
" soon as he returned.

" He was now driven to the height
" of desperation. He saw himself upon
" the point of losing the last remain-
" ing source, from which he drew the

" means of supporting himself in his ex-
" travagance, and he resolved to make
" a bold effort, to bury in darkness, his
" conduct to the Baroness.

" For this purpose, he got a poison-
" ous powder, which he contrived to
" have mixed with the food, that she
" and the maid ate of, which put an
" end to their existence; and it was re-
" ported they died of a contagious fever,
" which one caught from the other.

" He was now under no appre-
" hensions of a discovery, and he se-
" cretly rejoiced at the success of his
" scheme. The prosperous issue of this
" affair it was, that first impressed upon
" his mind, the thought of attempting
" the death of the Baron; who, upon
" his return, was so deeply affected

" with the loss he had sustained, as, for
" a time, to cause serious apprehensions
" to be entertained by his friends, of his
" recovery.

" SAINT Fleur had the mortification
" to find, that his health was restored,
" and he thought that there was no
" time to be lost, in putting into effect,
" the resolution he had made. He, ac-
" cordingly, after being foiled by Le-
" brun in his attempt at instant death,
" resolved to take the steps he did, and
" confine the unhappy Baron, in the
" hidden recesses of the subterraneous
" vaults of Saint Aubyn's castle.

" AFTER Lebrun's departure," con-
tinued old Dumain, " I visited the vaults
" several times, but could not force
" the massy locks and bars, with which

" the doors were secured, till it was too
" late to render the wretched victim,
" any assistance; as, when I succeeded
" in gaining admission, I found him a
" lifeless corse.

" I HAVE never ceased to blame my-
" self, for not getting help in my at-
" tempt to liberate him, which was
" my intention, had I fortunately been
" able to force the doors in time. I have
" every day and night since, visited the
" castle's vaults, to pour out my repent-
" ant sighs, for my negligence towards
" the unhappy wretched sufferer.

" SAINT Fleur, not knowing the ab-
" horrence and detestation I felt for the
" murder of his unoffending relatives,
" now engaged me to put to death their
" infant son, then about four years old.

" This I readily undertook, that I might
" have the power of saving him; and,
" I told the Chevalier, that I had left
" him upon the wild and dreary bosom
" of a mountainous forest, the haunt of
" wolves, where he was, by those rav-
" enous creatures, devoured before my
" eyes.

" I, HOWEVER, took him home, and
" brought him up as my own son, hav-
" ing lost my only boy, of his age,
" about that time, whose body I carried
" privately, to a distant hamlet church,
" and there interred it, the young Baron
" supplying his place, and passing for
" my child.

" ALTHOUGH I brought him up, un-
" der the idea of being son to an humble
" cottager, I bestowed upon him the

" best education the country could af-
" ford; which, aided by his natural abi-
" lities, soon made him outstrip all his
" competitors in learning. Notwith-
" standing it was thought, both by him-
" self, and every body else, that he was
" no more than a peasant's son, he soon
" shewed, that noble blood ran in his
" veins.

" The care that I took of him in his
" early, helpless years, I thought was
" the only reparation I could make
" him, for not using more exertion, to
" procure the liberation of his unhappy
" father. I expended the whole of my
" annual income upon him; and I re-
" tired, if not from affluence, at least
" from ease, and left a house and esta-
" blishment that I had at a distance,
" to live in a cottage, in the vale Le

" Pui, that I might, by the most rigid
" economy and self-privation, denying
" myself almost the necessaries of life,
" have the power to defray the ex-
" pence unavoidably attendant upon
" such an education, as would fit him,
" one day, to assume his rights and
" dignity. I had no anxiety on that
" head, his improvement more than
" keeping pace with my expectations.
" All I feared was, that he should form
" a connection in marriage, with some
" poor and obscure family in the vale,
" not thinking himself of higher origin
" than themselves; and, thereby disap-
" point views, that might hereafter
" open to his sight, when he should be
" acknowledged the rightful Baron
" Longuaville. To prevent that, I ex-
" acted from him a solemn oath, that
" he would never conclude a connec-

" tion of that nature, without my con-
" currence."

HERE the old man finished his narrative; and again begged forgiveness of the young Baron, for not disclosing sooner the secret of his birth; declaring, that he only waited for a favourable opportunity to inform him of it, when he might prosecute his claim, without the fear of being counteracted by the villany of Saint Fleur; who, he did not doubt, would use every method, illegal as well as legal, to stifle it in its birth.

LACROIX then repeated the contents of the paper which had been found in the vault of Saint Aubyn's castle, when Dumain declared he had the mark upon his body therein described, which corresponded exactly.

He now determined, immediately, to urge his claim to the Longuaville estates and title. In the mean time, he experienced great uneasiness on his sister's account; who, he had no doubt, after what he had heard of the villanous conduct of Saint Fleur, had met the fate of his unhappy father and mother.

When Dumain went with Lebrun to Filesac's lodgings, he had set out on his journey to the Pyrenees, upon his mission to the Marchioness. After his return, he corroborated, with many additional proofs, the guilt of Saint Fleur, as previously mentioned by Lebrun and Lacroix.

If these facts had not come to light in the manner they did, it was his intention to have come forward himself

as his accuser. For this purpose it was, that he went to the vale Le Pui, to old Dumain, to consult with him upon the best mode of proceeding, as he knew the abhorrence he felt at Saint Fleur's conduct. When they arrived in Paris, they found the situation of affairs precluded the necessity of their interference against him.

The reason why he wished the co-operation of old Dumain was, because he had strong grounds for supposition that the young Baron had not been put to death, as Saint Fleur believed; but, that he had been kept secretly alive, by the old man, for the purpose of one day bringing him forward, to claim the usurped title, and the estates, seized upon by his unnatural and rapacious relative.

This opinion was also formed by Lebrun, with this additional strength—his knowledge of the death of old Dumain's only child, just at the time that Saint Fleur delivered to him the infant son of the murdered Baron. This happening at the very period of time that he was obliged to fly from Saint Fleur's rage, and leave his country, he had not an opportunity of ever being able to ascertain the fact; but, his own knowledge of the humanity that had always shewn itself in old Dumain's actions, led him to believe, that the commission of such a crime as the murder of infant innocence, could not proceed from him. This opinion was further strengthened, by the occurrence that took place at Saint Reale, in the island of Sicily.

It may be recollected, that the last

visit Dumain made to the old abbey, Lebrun was absent. He had gone the night before, to a greater distance than he was aware of, and, being upon his return surprised by the dawn of day, he stopped in an unfrequented place, till the shades of night again approached, that he might reach the abbey without being seen; having always the fear of Saint Fleur's implacable disposition, so strongly impressed upon his mind, as to cause him to be perpetually on the alarm.

When night arrived, and he entered his solitary subterraneous habitation, he found the note Dumain had left for him, under the door of his apartment. When he saw the name of Dumain subscribed to it, and as the son of old Dumain of the vale Le Pui, conviction

immediately flashed upon his mind, that he was the secretly-preserved son of the murdered Baron Longuaville. He turned over in his thoughts this idea, day after day; the more he entertained the imagination, the more convinced he was of the probability of it. Besides, he now fancied that there was something in the person and manner of Dumain, that bespoke him the son of the late Baron.

With this impression on his mind, he determined to leave Sicily, and to brave all hazards, in again visiting his native shore, in the hope that he might be able to stem the torrent of Saint Fleur's vengeance, through the interest of the friends he would be sure to raise, by being the means of establishing the right of an oppressed and injured young

nobleman, against the cruel and unnatural usurper of his title and estates.

WITH this view, he set sail from Sicily, and arrived safe in France; the first place he visited, after he landed, being the vale Le Pui. He stopped at the same inn at which Montfort had called, on his first arrival there. —He made the necessary, though secret, inquiries respecting Dumain, but could not obtain any satisfactory information; and was, in the end, referred to Montfort, as to a man, to whom all the inhabitants of the valley looked up, for advice and information upon every subject.

WHEN he called, for that purpose, at the cottage, he was surprised to find the person he was recommended to for advice, to be the Marquis de Chalons.

He told him his errand, to which, he said, he was impelled by his suspicion that Dumain was not the son of the man whose child he passed for. He related to him an account of the murder of the late Baron Longuaville, without, however, mentioning the names of the actors in the tragedy, or any other particulars, except that old Dumain was, in part, acquainted with the circumstances attending it.

WHILST he was at the cottage, he never stirred out by day, for fear of being recognised by old Dumain, before his plan was ripe for execution; and he, at the same time, for the same reason, passed by the name of Girard.

MONTFORT and he visited, by night, the old castle several times, going into

the vault that contained the remains of the late Baron, which was the only place he ever went to, during his stay at the cottage. At length, finding the younger Dumain was not at his father's, he left the vale for Paris, with an intention of returning shortly again, in hopes that he would then be at home; which, the events that happened in the capital prevented, and rendered unnecessary.

CHAPTER XIV.

..... Shake
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind,
Unbounded passion, madness, guilt .....

THOMSON.

WHILST happiness, joy, and pleasure, reigned with uncontrouled sway, in the breasts of the Marquis and Marchioness de Chalons, and their lovely daughter, Saint Fleur was all wretchedness, dismay, and misery. His mind was in the most gloomy state, that sins of the blackest dye could cause it to be. He was tormented with the most corroding wounds in his breast; the vulture conscience was constantly gnawing his

sinking heart; and he passed his time in lurid melancholy, a prey to the burning stings, and poisonous arrows, that lodged within his rabid bosom.

He had, however, indulged the fallacious hope, that he had interest enough to procure a pardon from the King; and he never thought seriously of the situation in which he stood, till he learned that his former associates had given an account of all his villanous transactions, and atrocious acts of guilt. Then it was, for the first time, that he gave himself up for lost.

He was now urged to make all the reparation that was in his power, by confessing the extent, to which his guilty passions had led his captive reason, but he obstinately observed the

most sullen silence, to every question that was put to him.

He was afraid of being left alone, yet was uneasy when any body was with him, passing the heavy hours in the greatest uneasiness, and perturbation of spirits. He feared, that he had but a short time to breathe this sublunary air, before he would be called to an awful account of the actions of his past life. Notwithstanding which, he looked back upon the fleeting joys that he had experienced, more with regret that he could not again partake of them, than with sorrow for the wicked scenes he had been engaged in, for their attainment. He looked forward, more with horror at the hidden secrets of the unfathomable abyss before him, than with the comfortable hope that repentance would afford him.

When he was informed, that old Dumain had deceived him, by saving the life of the infant son of the late Baron Longuaville; that he was now living, and had claimed his right to the title and estates; instead of being glad, that his soul was eased from the heavy burden of another murder, he cursed Dumain, for the fraud he had practised on him.

In this situation he was, as to the state of his mind, when the dawn of morning broke upon the day, that was to see a deservedly ignominious end put to his guilty life.

The terrible apparatus of death was prepared.—The deep-toned bell sounded its awful summons.—Saint Fleur heard it with terror and dismay.—He

could not bring his stubborn soul to a state of repentance, and he looked at the leap into eternity, with the most horrible emotions of fear. The dreadful gulph was before him, which appeared enveloped in darkness, misery, and horror. Hope had fled from his wretched breast. Despair had taken possession of her hold.

When the officers entered, to conduct him to the scaffold, they found him writhing in excruciating pain. Deep, heavy sighs, with spasmodic starts, and an unmeaning stare upon the airy space, shewed the commotion that was raging in his breast. His agonized body was convulsed in every muscle. His blood, which began to curdle in his veins, stopping the wholesome circulation, was arrested in its progress towards

the heart, and remained stagnant in its parts, giving to his distorted features a livid blackness, horrible to view.—He groaned hideously.—The froth forced itself through his firm-clenched teeth.—His eyes were fixed.—His lower jaw fell upon his breast.—A cold sweat bedewed his skin.—A deep and hollow groan was repeated from his despairing bosom.—That groan was his last.

Such was the end of the once gay, but always vicious Saint Fleur. It was thought, that to avoid the death on the scaffold, that the law had sentenced him to suffer, he had taken poison; which, upon his body being opened by the surgeons, was found to be the case.

CHAPTER XV.

Happily I have arrived at last
Unto the wished haven of my bliss.

SHAKESPEAR.

AFTER the conviction of Saint Fleur, and the knowledge of his extensive guilt, aided by the evidence of old Dumain, and other circumstances, the young Baron found no difficulty in getting possession of the estates that belonged to him; in which, as well as in his title, he was confirmed by the King. He had, however, still a claim, in which

his heart was more interested, than in all the large possessions he was heir to from his father—his claim to Matilda's hand. He urged it with success, she acknowledging that he had long held possession of her heart. The Marquis de Chalons gave a sanction to their love, and consented to their union.

The young Baron Longuaville felt himself the happiest of human beings; he found himself in possession of a treasure, that he had never dared, but at a distance, to view, even when he thought Matilda and himself were, as to condition, upon terms of equality, in the peaceful vale Le Pui; and, when he found that she was the daughter of the Marquis de Chalons, he gave up, as for ever lost, every hope he had before entertained, of some time being in a

situation to offer her his hand, by persuading his supposed father to release him from his oath. Now, that circumstances unforeseen had raised him, in an unexpected manner, to rank and affluence; and found his wishes, that he lately looked upon as impossible to be accomplished, crowned with all the success his most romantic hopes could picture to his fond imagination, he was nearly frantic with joy; it was almost too much for his enraptured soul to bear, with any degree of moderation.

MATILDA's heart felt not less the joy than his did; but the appearance of it outwardly, was more restrained by that sweet and ineffable delicacy and modesty, which she possessed in so peculiar a degree. Indeed, she found herself most happy. A father, whom she

revered, upon the brink of an everlasting separation, restored to her with renovated health, and spirits exhilarated beyond what she had ever seen in him before; a long-lost mother, for whom, without knowing that she had a daughter's title, she had felt all a daughter's affection, to be, at the same instant, given to her fond bosom; with her promised union with the only man she ever saw, that had inspired her heart with chaste and pure love, of the most refined nature, were ecstatic pleasures, that her delicately susceptible soul could not but be sensible of, in the highest degree of mental enjoyment.

Her mind being now eased from the burdens with which it had been so long oppressed, she thought of the melancholy situation of her young friend, in

the monastery of Saint Catherine, whose liberty she determined to endeavour to procure. For this purpose, the Marquis, her father, who had been again taken into favour by the King and Queen, got an order to have the convent searched. By the directions which Matilda was able to give, of the cell, where she was locked up, it was easily found; she was liberated, and conducted to Paris, whilst the Lady Abbess was dispossessed of her situation, as superior of the convent, and was doomed to spend the remainder of her days, as a private nun, in all the strictness of monastic discipline.

When Constance was introduced, by Matilda, to the young Baron Longuaville, she appeared agitated and confused at hearing the name; she

imagined that Saint Fleur, who had usurped that title, and by whom it was she had been so persecuted, was dead, and that this was his heir. When matters came, however, to be explained, Longuaville found, that, in the young stranger, he had gained a sister; his lost sister, on whose account he had felt the only anxiety with which his breast had lately been invaded.

Constance was the only one of the party, that did not seem to be perfectly at ease. Sighs would sometimes escape from her heaving bosom, which she would endeavour to suppress; but she could not conceal them from Matilda and her brother. They did all in their power to divert her mind from the melancholy that seemed to have taken possession of it; but their endeavours were not crowned with the wished success;

her dejection of spirits rather increasing than otherwise.

The Marquis de Chalons now proposed to leave Paris, to visit, and take possession of Villeroy Castle, to which he had succeeded, as heir to his aunt, the late Countess, and to make it, for some time, the place of his residence. Longuaville and Matilda were in hopes that change of scene, and variety of objects, would have a happy effect upon the oppressed spirits of Constance, and they prevailed upon her to accompany them.

They had been at the castle for some time, without any visible alteration in her; when, all at once, she assumed a cheerful air, seeming to have lost all her late melancholy, and to have found, in its stead, exhilaration's spright-

ly wit; and she shone the picture of happiness and joy.

Longuaville and Matilda were both rejoiced to find this improvement in her mind and manner; but were ignorant to what fortunate circumstance it was owing, till they learned from Constance herself.

It may be remembered, that she had told Matilda, in the convent, that she was upon the point of marriage with a young chevalier, at the time she was forcibly conveyed a captive to her dismal cell, and taken, as she feared, for ever, from the world. In consequence of the report, that Saint Fleur and the Lady Abbess had propagated, of her death, she feared that the Chevalier de Clairet, imposed upon by the falsehood, had fixed his heart upon another, more

happy object. This idea had taken deep root in her bosom, and preyed upon her health, which was visibly upon the decline.

In this state of mind and health she was, when, one day, walking in the neighbourhood of Villeroy castle, she was overtaken by a young man on horseback, and heard her name pronounced, in an exclamation of joyful surprise. She turned her head, and saw, to her great pleasure and astonishment, the Chevalier de Clairet. A mutual explanation took place, to the satisfaction of both; which meeting it was, that had caused the sudden alteration in her spirits.

The next day, De Clairet called at the castle, to be introduced to the brother of his Constance. His name was

announced; the door was opened, and he entered. " Matilda!——Dumain! " ——Chatillon!——" were at once vociferated, to the surprise and astonishment of Constance.

It appeared, that when Saint Fleur had succeeded in getting Constance secured in the monastery of Saint Catherine, De Clairet was informed, through a secret channel, that he had formed a a design against his life; which was caused by his fears, that the force of his love would lead him to discover where she was concealed, as he did not doubt, but he would make the most diligent search and inquiry after her.

De Clairet, whose person was unknown to Saint Fleur, upon this, changed his name to Chatillon, which was that of his mother before her marriage, and de-

termined to watch him with closeness, in hopes of discovering where he had conveyed her to. He followed him at a distance, wherever he went, till he was convinced that the object of his affections was no more; being imposed upon by the report that Saint Fleur had caused to be circulated to that effect.

His health and spirits were much affected by his loss, and he went to Montpelier, in hopes of obtaining relief, from the salubrity of the air, where he met Dumain, with whom, under the name of Chatillon, he formed an intimacy. He was afterwards in the neighbourhood of Viviers, when Saint Fleur gave his masked *fête*, to which he went, in the habit of a hussar, and saved Matilda from the lawless and ruffian grasp of her villanous host.

Constance now partook of the general joy of this happy party, and shortly after bestowed her hand upon De Clairet, at the same time that Longuaville led to the altar, his adored and lovely Matilda, where they were united in the silken bands of hymen.

Upon the death of the Marquis de Saint Aubyn, which happened some years afterwards, Baron Longuaville succeeded to his title and estates. He then repaired the ancient castle, near the vale Le Pui, at which he and his Matilda passed a great part of their time. He fitted up the cottage, in which Montfort took up his first abode, upon his arrival in the vale, as a rural lodge to the castle; to which they frequently retired, and enjoyed in peaceful pleasure, the recollection of the scenes of early life they had passed there, with

grateful thankfulness, where thankfulness only was due, for their deliverance out of the many troubles they had afterwards experienced, and for the blessings they now enjoyed.

The Baron and Baroness Longueville, now become Marquis and Marchioness de Saint Aubyn, lived to an extended age, a pattern of conjugal felicity, and of universal benevolence; beloved by the circle in which they moved, and adored by their dependants and inferiors, among whom they were ever engaged in acts of philanthropy and charity.

THE END.

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